LILITH

THE JEWISH WOMEN'S MAGAZINE #18 $3.50 WINTER 1987-88/5748

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Graduate Theological Union
JAN 26 1988

How is ISRAEL Changing Ethiopian Women?

JEWISH WOMEN IN LOVE, THEN AND NOW

CONFRONTING HUSBANDS WHO WITHHOLD DIVORCES

THE WOMEN'S GALLERY

Ukrainian-born Chana Orloff spent most of her life in Paris. Her sculptures were fashioned in bronze and were similar to the less abstract work of Henry Moore in that they seem to be formed by a force of pushing outward rather than being carved out of something. After her first show in 1916 in Paris, her work traveled world-wide. She died in Israel in 1968, while preparing a retrospective celebrating her 80th birthday. (Photos courtesy of Pucker Safrai Gallery, Boston.)

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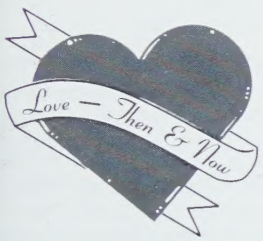

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THE COVER
Women from Ethiopia, like this Antonius villager photographed in 1983 by Ilene Perlman, struggle to fit into modern Israeli society, finding its options both freeing and frightening. (Photo of Israeli street scene by Layle Silbert. Cover design by Barbara Taff)

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LILITH is named for the legendary predecessor of Eve who insisted on equality with Adam: "*After the Holy One created the first human being, Adam, He created a woman, also from the earth, and called her 'Lilith.' Lilith said, 'We are equal because we both come from the earth.'*" (from *The Alphabet of Ben Sira, 23a-b*)

**THE PREPARED TABLE* takes its title from the English translation of *Shulchan Aruch*, which has long served as the authoritative code of Jewish behavior according to *halacha* (Jewish law). As Jewish feminists continue to rediscover and rework tradition, custom and practice, a new egalitarian Prepared Table will emerge. We list here selections from this evolving Prepared Table.

FROM THE EDITORS

In our Fall issue (#17), LILITH ran an investigative report and analysis of the escalation of attacks on "*JAPs*"—"Jewish American Princesses"—on college campuses and elsewhere.

The story received a great deal of media attention—from reports in *The New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Detroit Free Press*, *Philadelphia Inquirer* and other dailies and the Associated Press to radio and TV interviews. A great deal of the media attention was generated by a press luncheon to showcase the issue, held at the American Jewish Committee headquarters in New York.

Julia Wolf Mazow, LILITH's Fiction Editor, had initiated an innovative plan to convince Houston rabbis to denounce this stereotyping of Jews by other Jews. Houston attorney Sherry Merfish, who has continued Mazow's work, was one of the featured speakers at the press luncheon, along with author Francine Klagsbrun—whose thoughts about why the "*JAP*" stereotype is getting a new lease on life right *now* appeared in #17—and LILITH editor-in-chief Susan Weidman Schneider.

Along with the general misogyny that undergirds this smear of Jewish women is the anti-Semitism embodied in the sentiment that Jews are not entitled to the same material comforts and status symbols that the American culture tells all individuals to aspire to.

In this issue, two pieces under the rubric "Love, Then and Now" look at whether or not Jewish women are entitled to romantic bliss.

The first one is the story of Michal, the only woman in the Bible to fall in love. Nehama Aschkenasy, who teaches courses in women in world literature, provides insights as to why Michal is treated so harshly not only by David, the object of her passion, but also by the teller of this tale.

An unhappy-ending story of 3,000 years later comes to us from the soap opera "Days Of Our Lives." Here, a long-running story-line featured a Jewish woman who falls in love with one of her non-Jewish medical colleagues—but is not allowed to live happily ever after. Naomi Pfefferman reports from Los Angeles on *why*.

And speaking of happy—and unhappy—endings, Adena Berkowitz's article on Jewish divorce (*get*) discusses how—and why—the fight for the rights of the *aguna* (woman whose husband refuses to give her a *get*, leaving her in limbo) has moved to different venues: to the secular courts and even into the streets.

Little progress on *get* is being made in the *halachic* (Jewish legal) sphere. This—and other *halachic* matters that especially affect women—will be dealt with in *responsa* to *your* questions in future issues to be written by outstanding women scholars including Rachel Adler, Rabbi Rebecca Alpert, Adena Berkowitz, Rachel Biale, Rabbi Amy Eilberg, Rabbi Joan Friedman, Blu Greenberg, Beverly Gribetz and Judith Hauptman.

Conflict is the subject of Andrea King's report from Jerusalem on how Ethiopian women are trying to reconcile the multitude of options now available to them in Israeli society (to study, to work, to move freely outside the home) with the destruction of traditional customs that had great meaning for them in their country of origin, such as living in a menstrual hut for the week of their periods. As feminists, we ask: is this liberating or oppressive?

One new immigrant to Israel whose feelings are those of total joy is Ida Nudel (see *Kol Ishah*). LILITH's Women's Appeal for Nudel, signed by thousands of our subscribers (so many that we could not list them here as we did in #16 and #17), provided a strong signal to the Soviets of the popular support for her right—and the rights of all the other refuseniks—to be reunited with their relatives in Israel.

In #16, we quoted from a letter by Nudel to British historian Martin Gilbert about her wish to celebrate Chanukah in Israel. Now that dream will come true. Her letter calls on us to "remember those [the refuseniks] who, despite the persecutions and harassment, will celebrate our holiday, who will light candles, who will tell their children about the history and dignity of the people they belong to."

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CORRECTION
The photograph of Malka Tussman on page 23 of #17 was taken by Lucy Eichengreen, and made available to LILITH by Elaine Starkman.

LILITH thanks for their assistance: Jewel Bellush, Susan Birnbaum, Barbara Dobkin, Arthur Drache, Linda Greenman, Francine Klagsbrun, Corrine Azen Krause, Irving Levine, Sherry Merfish, Natalie Pelavin, Letty Cottin Pogrebin, Glenn Richter, Rafi Rothstein, Richard Siegel, Sue Stevens, Henny Wenkart, Moe Yarmon

LINES OF COMMUNICATION

"JAP-BAITING": HOW TO FIGHT BACK

To the Editor:
Congratulations to LILITH and my special thanks to Judith Rubenstein for bringing my research and social action on campus "JAP-baiting" to the attention of your readers *[issue #17]* and indeed to the nation.

Until recently, I have been feeling quite isolated, a little lonely.... Now, with your help, the issues are spreading to other campuses and hopefully also to many Jewish communities where the self-denigration begins....

It is unfortunate that the media have focused on the "*JAP*-joke" and whether or not feminists have a "sense of humor." My research shows quite clearly that "*JAP*-jokes" ... progress to more serious issues of gender denigration, sexual harassment, implied physical and sexual violence, and ugly annihilationist sentiment. One has only to look at the Syracuse example to see the ugly consequences of what students have come to view simply as "harmless fun."

The issue transcends the degree to which feminists do or do not have a sense of humor. "*JAP*-baiting" is a pernicious slur. It is participated in by Jewish women against other Jewish women, by Jewish men against Jewish women, and by non-Jewish men and women against Jewish and non-Jewish women. When Jews denigrate one another they give legitimacy to non-Jews to do likewise, and an environment is created that permits those who hate to join in with impunity. At its roots are the all-too-familiar issues of sexism, sexual denigration, class and regional antagonisms, anti-Semitism, and ignorance regarding how stereotyping leads to "false correlations" between appearance and behavior.

We at Syracuse are now working hard to reduce the "*JAP*-baiting", and issues of sexism and bigotry more generally are being seriously addressed by students and administrators. There is resistance, but there is also a rising tide of support. Above all what must be overcome are ignorance, denial, and indifference. For too long, gender and ethnic denigration have been simply accepted as part of the everyday reality of campus life.

Again, thank you for your efforts. Let us continue to join battle against bigotry and ignorance in all its forms.

Gary Spencer, Ph.D.
Department of Sociology
Syracuse University
Syracuse NY

To the Editor:
I have been a subscriber since the inception of your magazine. It has been a revelation to me to find many of my thoughts and concerns in print. It is difficult enough to be Jewish, but to be a Jewish feminist woman often lends itself to paradox. I have shared your magazine with my college-age daughters, and your latest issue especially has touched them deeply.

Lately, I have felt a rising tide of anti-Semitism. It seems that it is more acceptable to be overt in making gestures and voicing vicious and hateful thoughts about Jews—particularly Jewish women.

The Reagan backlash has allowed a vacuum into which negative actions are fed. "*JAP*ing" is partially a result of the times; unfortunately, I believe, it is also fed by our own poor images of ourselves as Jewish women. This can be undone by learning our own unique history and tradition.

Thanks to LILITH, we are beginning.

Karen Schulte
Oakdale NY

KEMPNER AS ORAL HISTORY

To the Editor:
With regard to the interview with Vitke Kempner [fighter in the Vilna ghetto, profiled in *issue #16*], I fail to see the value of literally transcribing the grammatical mistakes of the interviewee, who was speaking in neither her native nor adopted tongue. I think Ms. Cantor's technique performed a disservice to the interviewee as well as making her story harder for the reader to follow.

Dr. Daniella Saltz
Ann Arbor MI

Aviva Cantor responds:
We gave a great deal of thought to this question. We felt strongly that words spoken in an interview could not be treated as words originally written down on paper. In a printed interview, as in a radio interview, it is important to "hear" the speaker's voice, her own words, as she spoke them. Furthermore, Kempner's words are part of our history, even as her actions are. It would have been both a disservice and a dishonor to Kempner—and to the historical record —to change her words.

COVER PHOTO OF AN ARGENTINE MADRE

Dear LILITH:
I am one of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo and my photograph was published on the front of LILITH #15. I want to thank you for the article about us.

Maria Lugo de Sans
Buenos Aires, Argentina

LILITH
"MY CHILDREN ARE DISAPPEARED"— AN ARGENTINE MOTHER'S NIGHTMARE
A FEMINIST RABBI RECLAIMS MIKVAH
WHY ARE JEWISH WOMEN MORE VULNERABLE TO RAPE? CAN WE FIGHT BACK?

The photograph of Mrs. de Sans was a still from the film "The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo" by Susana Munoz and Lourdes Portillo, which we wrote about in our story, "My Children Are Disappeared: An Argentine Mother's Nightmare" in issue #15. The identity of Mrs. de Sans was not known to us at the time we received the photograph, and we are glad to bring it to our readers' attention.—Ed.

(Continued on Page 32)

KOL ISHAH

NUDEL ARRIVES IN ISRAEL

Kol Ishah—"Woman's Voice." Traditionally, the voice of the Jewish woman was not to be heard in public, lest it arouse men. No more. These pages are for news about Jewish women, usually in their own strong voices.

Ida Nudel, known as "the Angel of the Refuseniks," arrived in Israel from the Soviet Union October 15, 1987, after having been granted an exit visa October 12 after 16 years of waiting.

The 56-year-old engineer-economist, on whose behalf LILITH conducted a Women's Appeal that garnered thousands of signatures (*see issues #16 and #17*) landed at Ben Gurion Airport in Lod in a jet furnished by industrialist Armand Hammer.

She was welcomed by hundreds of reporters and dignitaries. Her sister Elana Fridman, whom she had not seen for 16 years, along with Fridman's husband and son, greeted her as did Premier Yitzhak Shamir, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, Hammer, and actress Jane Fonda, active on behalf of Nudel and other Soviet Jews. Fonda had met Fridman in Jerusalem in 1979 and learned about Nudel's plight; she visited Nudel in Bendery, Moldavia, and had long worked to bring about her release. Speaking in English and promising to learn Hebrew quickly, Nudel addressed the crowd:

"A few hours ago I was almost a slave in Moscow. Now I'm a free woman in my own country. It is the moment of my life. I am at home at the soul of the Jewish people. I am a free person among my own people." She told reporters she would continue to work for the release of all Jews wanting to leave the Soviet Union.

For years Nudel has been called the "guardian angel" of Prisoners of Conscience because of her packages, visits, and concern for them and their condition. While still in Moscow, Nudel expressed her hope that "all my friends in Russia should leave soon. Many people should leave every day."

Nudel had first applied for a visa in 1971 and was originally refused in 1972. Earlier this year her name had appeared on a list of refuseniks who, Soviet authorities said, would never be granted exit visas. However, when Peres met with Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze in September, he gave Shevardnadze a list of former Prisoners of Conscience, which was headed by Nudel's name.

Nudel had been exiled to Siberia in 1978 after she hung a banner from her Moscow apartment asking for an exit visa. When she returned from Siberia in 1982, officials would not allow her to live again in Moscow. A number of other cities also rejected her presence.

She was finally permitted residence in Bendery, where she was often harassed. When she tried to see Elie Wiesel when he visited Moscow in 1986, she was forced off a bus in Bendery and beaten.

When Nudel heard of her coming release, she was in

Ida Nudel is welcomed upon arrival in Israel by supporter Jane Fonda, sister Elana Fridman and Premier Yitzhak Shamir.

Moscow applying for permission to resume her residence there. Rudolf Kutznetsov, head of the Moscow OVIR (emigration bureau), told her to return to Bendery to get her emigration papers in order; she had permission to leave.

Like observers throughout the world who have followed her saga closely, Nudel has few illusions about the meaning of her release. Coming as it did on *Erev Yom Kippur*, the evening of *Kol Nidre*, seemed to assure both a heavy emotional impact and a diplomatic advantage: "In ancient times, the Pharaohs used to please the chiefs of neighboring countries with very exotic things. I feel that I am a white crocodile. I was used to please Mr. Reagan and Mr. Schultz before a meeting of the superpowers."

After the official airport reception and press conference Nudel went over to the parking lot of Israel Aircraft Industries, where she attended a "Reception and Salute to Ida Nudel." The second reception, organized by the Israel Women's Committee for Ida Nudel and the Public Committee for Soviet Jewry, drew a crowd estimated at between 5,000 and 10,000.

Nudel spent her first night in Israel at the Tel Aviv Hilton. She told reporters the next day she was amazed by the color of the sky—Mediterranean blue, not Moscow gray.

Asked by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency what she had brought with her from the Soviet Union, Nudel replied, "My faithful dog, Pizer, who has been my constant companion since she was brought to me in Siberia as a five-week-old puppy, my books, and the very warm blanket which I cannot do without."

The Monday following her arrival, she had lunch with Israeli President Chaim Herzog. She sat in a chair that had her name on it; it had been empty for the last five years, anticipating the time when she would finally be released.

ACTION FOR NUDEL

Action and interest on behalf of Ida Nudel continued up until just a few days before she was told she could emigrate. In August, 23 Moscow refuseniks appealed to General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev to permit Nudel to live in Moscow. Her only crime, they said in their appeal, "was her active struggle for her undeniable right to rejoin her only relative, her sister, in Israel." The refuseniks' plea stated:

"Now, when the USSR aims for a democratic society and many Prisoners of Conscience were given freedom, we hope that Ida Nudel, about whose health and living conditions we worry, will also experience the results of '*perestroika*.' We appeal to you to renew her right of residence in Moscow." ("*Perestroika*" means "restructuring" and refers to what is considered the current limited opening up of some aspects of Soviet society.)

Andrea King reported from Jerusalem that in September, Norwegian actress Liv Ullmann met Elana Fridman at the Jerusalem Cinematheque for the dedication of a balcony in Ullmann's honor. The meeting took place following a screening at the Cinematheque of Ullmann's new film, "Moscow Farewell," based loosely upon the life of Ida Nudel.

The film, which is in English, was directed by Mauro Bolognini of Italy. It depicts the life of a refusenik named Ida, her protests, and her days in a Siberian labor camp as well as her isolated existence following her release. The film also includes the story of a marriage for its heroine and a lover, about neither of which anyone familiar with Nudel claims to know anything. Fridman did, however, travel to Rome, where she served as a consultant to the film.

Ullmann said that although she has not met Nudel or spoken with her, she has read her letters and other writings and feels she has come to know her through them. At the dedication of the balcony, Ullmann said she hoped one day Nudel could join her there for a drink.

Before the screening, Ullmann recalled for the audience "a time in history, not so long ago, when terrible things happened and people said afterward that they did not know, did not see, did not hear." The actress continued:

"We have no excuse now in the case of the Soviet Union. We do know, we do see, we do hear, and we have to mention their names every day so as to remember Ida and all the others who want to leave the Soviet Union and aren't allowed."

Elena Fridman said she had spoken to Nudel, who sent her thanks and a kiss to Ullmann, whom she hoped to meet one day in Jerusalem.

Meanwhile, in New York, the Jabotinsky Foundation of New York announced that Ida Nudel, along with three others, will receive the 1987 Defender of Jerusalem Award, which carries a cash prize of $25,000. Said Eryk Spektor, chairman of the Foundation:

"We play tribute to the faith, courage, and spirit of this remarkable woman who is the standard-bearer for all Jewish dissidents and a symbol of the plight of the Jews in the Soviet Union."

CONGRESSIONAL WIVES MEET "A LEGEND"

Declaring "it was like meeting a legend," seven American women met with Soviet refusenik Ida Nudel in Moscow in June as part of a four-day fact-finding mission by the Congressional Wives for Soviet Jewry (CWSJ) and B'nai B'rith Women (BBW).

"It was so startling to see her," said Wren Wirth, wife of Sen. Timothy Wirth (D-CO). "She's so small, so vibrant, and has tremendous energy."

Present at the meeting with Nudel, in addition to Wren Wirth, were CWSJ members Joanne Kemp, wife of Rep. Jack Kemp (R-NY); Delores Beilenson, wife of Sen. Anthony Beilenson (D-CA); and Teresa Heinz, wife of Sen. H. John Heinz (R-PA).

BBW President Irma Gertler and BBW Public Affairs Direc-

(Continued on Page 32)

Courtesy of B'nai B'rith Women

Four Congressional Wives for Soviet Jewry, BBW president Irma Gertler, at meeting with Ida Nudel (center) and refusenik women.

"SISTERS OF LIGHT" GATHER TO RECLAIM JUDAISM FOR WOMEN

Twenty-five women dance in a circle, late in the afternoon before Shabbat, beside a secluded natural pool in the woods. Chanting fills the air: "Thank you Mother Earth; thank you Sister Water; thank you for my birth; thank you from your daughter."

This was the *mikvah* (ritual immersion) ceremony at the *Achyot Or* (Sisters of Light) weekend gathering of 40 Jewish feminists from several East Coast cities at a retreat center near Philadelphia last summer.

Achyot Or grew out of the experience of several women who are members of a related group called *B'not Eysh*, Daughters of Fire. *B'not Eysh's* 24 women have met annually since 1981 for an intimate weekend focusing on issues of feminist theology: the connection between spirituality and sexuality; images of God/ess; and the impact of ritual practice on women.

The *Achyot Or* gathering was organized by six Philadelphia women to reach out to the many women who had heard of *B'not Eysh* gatherings and wished to participate in such events.

The gathering was built around three theme groups. The artists' group focused on each woman's struggle to affirm herself as both an artist and a woman, two marginalized identities in this society. Participants in the theme group on "Living our lives as Jewish Feminists" talked about the impact of class and ethnic background on women's aspirations.

The spirituality group, in discussing the relationship between spirituality and Jewish ritual, created a new name for the God/ess: *Rachamema*, a blend of the Hebrew words meaning womb (*rechem*), compassion (*rachamim*) and mother (*Ema*).

At one afternoon workshop, artist Deborah Krueger taught women how to make plaster breast-plates. For much of the weekend nine beautiful casts of women's breasts proudly adorned the mantle of the main meeting room. One woman said, "It was so affirming to see huge Jewish women's breasts as art. It gave me a whole new acceptance of my own body."

Participants, who came from diverse backgrounds, included feminists who live according to *halacha* (Jewish law), women just beginning to explore their Jewish identity and others whose commitment to Judaism is based on radical feminist re-interpretation.

Joanna Katz had originally envisioned the gathering "to bring together peers who are creating Jewish feminism ... all equally creative, responsible and empowered to make this movement happen." Katz and Julie Greenberg—both rabbinical students and active organizers in the Philadelphia Jewish feminist community—can be reached at 117 W. Carpenter Lane, Philadelphia PA 19119, for information on next Memorial Day's gathering, which a planning committee has undertaken to organize.

—Julie Greenberg and Joanna Katz

Photographs by Gail Rubin at age 39, the internationally acclaimed wildlife photographer murdered by PLO terrorists in a bird sanctuary in Israel, were exhibited in September at the Hutchins Gallery of the C.W. Post Campus of Long Island University.

The exhibit, which features 39 of Rubin's photographs of birds, beasts, and flowers as well as landscapes, portraits and abstracts, was organized by her mother, Estelle Rubin of New York. It includes the red-legged stork at Ma'ayan Michael, the bird sanctuary where she was photographing when she was shot in 1978.

The exhibit, which has also been seen in Manhattan, will travel to other sites in the New York metropolitan area, before its tour concludes in Israel's Jerusalem Theatre next fall. Gail Rubin's work appeared in LILITH #5.

WOMEN ADVANCE IN JEWISH EDUCATION

Women are moving into the field of Jewish education at an unprecedented rate, not only as teachers, but also as supervisors and administrators. Before the 1960's, more than 90% of the management positions in Jewish education were held by men. Today, many women are serving as principals or educational directors of schools, as administrators in central agencies, and as faculty members or administrators in institutions of higher learning.

This assessment was made by Dr. Eliot Spack, Executive Director of the Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education (CAJE) following the most recent CAJE conference this August.

(No figures are available to document this change. The last such survey, conducted by the American Association for Jewish Education and reported on in LILITH #6, 1979, revealed that only 10 percent of women educators in metropolitan areas were working as principals, supervisors or education directors.—Ed.)

Spack cited as evidence of the emergence of women on the Jewish educational scene, the fact that approximately two-thirds of the almost 4,000 members of CAJE are women, as were 74 percent of the nearly 1,700 people who attended its latest Conference.

—Natalie Flatow

OBITUARIES

Rimma Bravve, the former Moscow refusenik, died in June at the age of 32 in Rochester. Bravve received an exit visa, along with her husband, last December. She was the second of a group of five known as the International Cancer Patients Solidarity Committee.

Nancy Datan, an author, gerontologist, and Professor of Human Development who held the Chair of Women's Studies at the University of Wisconsin, died in May at the age of 46. She was the author of *A Time to Reap: The Middle Ages of Women in Five Israeli Subcultures*, which she wrote after living and teaching for ten years in Jerusalem.

Mollie Golub of New York, a lawyer and honorary national president of AMIT Women, died in June at the age of 87. She had been active in the women's Zionist movement for over 40 years.

REFUSENIK REPORT

Nadezhka Fradkova, a former Prisoner of Conscience who spent 1984-86 in a labor camp, arrived in Israel in June. Refuseniks recently granted exit visas, in addition to Ida Nudel include:

- **Anna Lichterova** of Moscow, refused permission 10 years ago and granted a visa in September.
- **Elena Prestin** of Moscow with her husband Vladimir and son Mikhail, who applied

in 1970.

• **Evgenya Palanker**, a computer engineer from Yerevan, Armenian SSR, her husband Vili and sons Dmitri and Evgeny and mother-in-law **Elizabeta Demanovskaya**, who applied in 1980.

• **Emma Landsman**, a computer programmer from Moscow, with her husband Boris and daughter **Aviva**, who applied in 1976.

• **Janna Lerner** of Moscow, with her husband Valery and son Igor, who applied in 1977.

• **Cherna Goldort**, reunited with her two daughters in Israel. Goldort was twinned with Sandra Goldberg of Palm Beach FL, at Goldberg's Bat Mitzvah ceremony at age 50.

• **Dorina Paritsky** of Kharkov whose father Alexander, is a former Prisoner of Conscience.

• **Maria Slepak** and husband Vladimir, who first applied in 1970. Maria is a radiologist known by the nickname Masha. Both were arrested in 1978 for hanging a banner outside their Moscow apartment stating, "Let us go to our son in Israel" (Alexander was allowed to immigrate in 1977). After Vladimir was sentenced to five years' exile in Siberia, Masha, though given a three-year suspended sentence, voluntarily shared her husband's exile.

There are reportedly at least two groups of women refuseniks, and one each of families and children. One of the larger groups, "Jewish Women for the Repatriation to Israel and Survival in Refusal," claims 120 members throughout the Soviet Union.

They applied to attend the international World Congress of Women, held in June in Moscow, hoping to present a picture of their lives in refusal, but were denied permission because they are not "an official group."

Writers of unby-lined stories in these pages included **Shirley Frank, Reena Sigman Friedman,** *and* **Julia Wolf Mazow.**

MAZEL TOV

TOTAL OF 141 WOMEN RABBIS

Eleven woman were ordained in June as Reform and Reconstructionist rabbis, bringing to 141 the total number of women ordained since 1972.

Nine women were ordained into the Reform rabbinate: **Esther Jo Adler**, of Tarzana Beach CA; **Beth Dina Davidson**, of Sag Harbor NY; **Susan Laemmel Fletcher** of Hermosa Beach CA; **Lynn Heather Goldstein** of Philadelphia; **Sara Jo Messinger** of Scarsdale NY; **Miriam Ella Shapiro** of Van Nuys CA; **Marjorie Slome** of Cincinnati; **Sue Ann Wasserman** of Pound Ridge NY, and **Donna Ilene Greenfield Adler** of Brookline MA.

The Reconstructionist Rabbinicial School ordained two new women rabbis: **Barbara Rosman Penzer** of Leawood KS, and **Amy Zweiback Levenson** of Vineland NJ.

NORMA JOSEPH APPOINTED "SCHOLAR-IN-RESIDENCE"

Norma Joseph, a leading Jewish feminist author and lecturer, has been appointed "scholar-in-residence" at the Women's Federation of Allied Jewish Community Services in Montreal for 1987-88.

Joseph, a PhD candidate in the Religion Department of Concordia University, will help members of the Women's Federation "enhance their awareness of their Jewish values as well as their identity as part of a Jewish women's organization."

The Women's Federation and Joseph have worked out a thematic approach for the year, with "different women, different times ... same Jewish values" as its working title. Joseph will present a four-part series of lectures, open to the public, based on this theme, and will also help the organization weave it through its programming for the year.

This is the first time a volunteer women's organization in North America has engaged a scholar-in-residence on a yearly basis.

AWARDS AND APPOINTMENTS

Arlene Agus, appointed assistant director of the William Petchek Family Foundation at the American Jewish Committee.

Wendy Elliman, a staff writer for *Hadassah Magazine* awarded the Boris Smolar Award for Excellence in North American Jewish Journalism.

Claudia Fogel, elected president of the Association of Jewish Vocational Service Professionals.

Shirley Frank, appointed assistant director of communications at the National Jewish Welfare Board and editor of the *JWB Circle*.

Billie Gold, appointed president of the Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York.

Beverly Gribetz appointed dean of *Prozdor*, the Jewish Theological Seminary's high school program.

Gerda W. Klein's book, *Promise of a New Spring: The Holocaust and Renewal*, received a Merit of Distinction Citation by the International Center for Holocaust Studies of the ADL of B'nai B'rith.

Helen Marcus, elected president of the Syracuse Jewish Federation.

Lucille R. Perlman, appointed chairperson of the Givat Haviva Educational Foundation.

Daphne Raz, appointed manager of the North American office of the *Jerusalem Post*, located in New York.

Bertha Reider, 76, a resident of the Jewish Home and Hospital for the Aged in New York, recently read from the Torah as she celebrated her Bat Mitzvah before her children and grandchildren. Ten months ago, when she moved into the home, she didn't know a letter of Hebrew.

Victoria Rouff, re-elected president of the Jewish Federation of Broome County New York.

Eileen Bluestone Sherman, author of *Monday in Odessa*, and **Myra Livingston**, author of *Poems for Jewish Holidays*, were the recipients of the 38th annual National Jewish Book Awards for Children's Literature.

Marilyn Silverstein, a feature writer for the *Jewish Exponent* of Philadelphia, received the Simon Rockower Award for Excellence in Jewish Journalism from the American Jewish Press Association.

Amy Sternberg, elected president of the Jewish Federation of the Greater East Bay, in Oakland CA.

Rachel Tannenbaum, associate executive director of the Jewish Federation of St. Louis, was the recipient of the National Association of Jewish Vocational Services' Benjamin S. Lowenstein Outstanding Professional Award.

Susan Tomchin, editor of *Women's World*, was awarded both the Simon Rockover Award for Excellence in Jewish Journalism by the American Jewish Press Association, and the Boris Smolar Award for Excellence in North American Jewish Journalism.

Renee Unterman has become the first woman mayor of Loganville GA.

IS ISRAEL REALLY LIBERATING FOR ETHIOPIAN WOMEN?

BY ANDREA KING

Reke Mullu is a 24-year-old Ethiopian woman from Gondar province who has mastered Hebrew and found a good job in Tel Aviv. Women like Reke Mullu, however, are a tiny minority. Most Ethiopian women in Israel have so far adapted minimally to Western ways.

Since Mullu's immigration in 1977, 7,000 Ethiopian Jews have arrived in Israel via Operation Moses (*see box*); an estimated 10,000 remain behind.

Most Ethiopian adults have been given housing in absorption centers for immigrants in development towns and small cities such as Ashkelon, Beersheba, Kiryat Gat, Nazareth Elit, and Migdal HaEmek; very few live in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv or Haifa. Some 96% of the children are living away from home in Youth Villages.

Although the absorption process has been difficult for all Ethiopians, who are placed in the position of having to juggle the realities of modern Israeli life with their traditional ways of living, it has been extremely hard on the women.

Ethiopian women were used to a society where their sole role was that of a caretaker of the home and children. They rarely made decisions, and their day-to-day lives were confined to their huts and the perimeter of their villages.

Mesfin Ambaw, former head of the Ethiopian Jewish Immigrants Association and now its treasurer, summed up the role of the Ethiopian woman in describing his mother. "She rarely spoke," he said, "and when I or another man would come into the room, all the conversation centered around us and she said nothing."

The women are shy and not used to speaking in public. It was extremely difficult to find Ethiopian women willing to be interviewed or photographed, and those that did agree often said nothing. In one interview, a woman sat surrounded by her husband, sons and some older men, and most of the questions asked of her were answered by them. When she did finally speak, it was in a whisper of a voice and she could only say "things are good here, better than in Ethiopia," no matter what the question.

Anthropologist Shalva Weil, who works at the National Council of Jewish Women's Research Institute for Innovation in Education at the Hebrew University, has spent many years studying Ethiopians and their culture. She finds the Ethiopian men are far more up-front and visible than the women. "This doesn't mean that the women aren't proud, but just that the men take over when it comes to external public relations."

"In the typical family in Ethiopia, the woman stays at home and rarely even goes outside," said Reke Mullu. "The husband does virtually everything, but not in the house. There, he doesn't even get up to get himself a cup of coffee."

Men do manual labor or work as blacksmiths, potters or weavers, Mullu continued. In some cases, the woman goes to work with the men, but then returns to the house at the end of the day and must then take care of everything with no help at all from her husband. This is the accepted way there.

In Ethiopia, the women can go to the synagogue, but services are primarily attended by men. The women's section is in the back of the sanctuary where *kessim* (priests) conduct the service in Gez, the liturgical languages of ancient Ethiopian origin. Only the *kessim* can read Gez and they then translate into Ethiopian. The *kessim* read from the Torah.

Up until ten years ago, according to Mullu, clitiordectomies were performed on girls in Ethiopia. Most people say the ceremony takes place at the age of 11, but one person interviewed said it took place in infancy.

The operation was performed by a *kinterkoraj*, a woman trained like a *mohel* (ritual circumcisor of infant Jewish boys) to do the operation. According to Ambaw, genital mutilation is more an Ethiopian practice than a Jewish one and is no longer done at all in Israel. The women were more reluctant than the men to discuss this and seemed embarrassed about it.

Most of the women, some of whom are literate and some not, are married very young in Ethiopia through arranged matches. It is not uncommon for girls to be married at the age of 10. After the wedding, the bride and

Ilene Perlman

Young Ethiopian girl shows her carvings of King Solomon and Queen Sheba, to whom Falashas trace their lineage. Conditions in Ethiopia, where Jews lived since ancient times, worsened after the end of the monarchy in 1974 and the civil war and famine. Operation Moses airlifted about 10,000 to Israel in the early 1980's; an equal number remain.

Marriam Cramer Ring

Many Ethiopian women are distressed that in Israel they are no longer able to be secluded in a menstrual hut during their periods.

groom live with their respective parents until the girl is about 15 and then move in together.

"In Ethiopia, being 18 years old and unmarried makes you an old maid," said Mullu. "If I were still there, I'd probably already have 10 children!"

Because birth control is nonexistent in the small Jewish Ethiopian villages that surround larger cities, families are large, and it is not rare to find 8 to 10 childen per family.

There are high rates of pregnancy complications and of infant mortality because of the low level of health care available.

The mainstay of the women's participation in Jewish life in Ethiopia is ritual purity. Once a month for seven days, as the Torah specifies, the women separates herself from her husband and family. She goes to live in a special mud-and-grass hut called a *mergemogodjo*. At the end of the separation period the woman immerses herself in the *mikvah* (ritual immersion area) next to the river.

Women willingly accept the separation as part of their lives, believing they are protecting their husbands and children from their "impurity." For many of the women, this break from the drudgery of their daily chores is welcomed, and many do weaving and pottery during this time.

The menstrual hut is usually located on the outskirts of the village and surrounded by a ring of rocks, which sets the limits for how far the women can wander. During this week, the woman has no contact with other villagers except for the other women in the hut or her children. Food brought by family members is not handed to her directly but placed in a specified area. Ambaw recalls bringing his mother meals and sliding it across the dirt "as if I were feeding a dog."

After giving birth, a woman goes to a similar hut, where she stays for 40 days if she has had a boy and for 80 days if she has had a girl. The longer time period for a girl is due to the fact that females are considered more "unclean" than males.

The greatest problem for the Ethiopian women living in Israel is the issue of family purity, according to Weil. "Recently I was at a meeting where Ethiopians were discussing how they could preserve their tradition and religion, she said. One old woman stood up to complain angrily about the lack of a menstrual hut here, and suggested one be built."

Weil points to the insensitivity on the part of the Ministry of Absorption when providng housing for the Ethiopian *olim* (immigrants). "It wouldn't have been hard, especially in absorption centers with large Ethiopian populations, to make one apartment in the building a place where menstruating women could go. It would have made a big difference." Weil concluded:

"Grandmothers, mothers and daughters are upset by this now, although future generations in Israel won't be bothered by it since it is finished, as a tradition, in Israel. But meanwhile, those that saw it as so important are very troubled. Many teenage girls living at Youth Villages throughout Israel are troubled that they are allowed to go to the synagogue when they have their periods."

A second aspect of the problem relating to the observance of ritual purity in Israel has to do with *mikvah* and this issue is tied up with that of the rabbinate's position on the Ethiopians' status as Jews.

The Israeli rabbinate, which questions the Jewishness of the Ethiopians, demands that they undergo a conversion ceremony which involves immersion in a *mikvah*. The Ethiopians, who have lived under oppressive

Marriam Cramer Ring

A woman from Wollequa village bakes Sabbath bread using water and teff, one of the household responsibilities of women in rural Ethiopia.

conditions for years believing that they are the holiest of Jews, have angrily refused. As a consequence, many have turned away from religion, although they carry on their traditions in the home.

This controversy has caused a particular problem for the women, who have been instructed by their male community leaders not to go to the *mikvah* once a month since that immersion would make it seem like they were giving into the rabbinate on conversion.

Most of the women still separate from their husbands during the week of menstruation regardless of the fact that they don't go to the *mikvah*. Many sleep in separate rooms and do not prepare meals or come near the family, said Mullu.

She cited one extreme case where the husband wanted things done as they were in Ethiopia and he sent his wife out of the house when she got her period. She was temporarily given shelter in an unused apartment, but eventually that was taken away. She now lives on the balcony one week a month, even when it is blazing hot, raining or freezing cold.

Married Ethiopian women, especially older ones, also find it difficult to adjust to modern Israeli society because their contacts with it are limited. In the absorption centers where they are living with other Ethiopians, their social contacts are primarily limited to other Ethiopian women. Most still spend their time cooking, cleaning, shopping, and caring for the children.

Women in their 40's experience problems in finding work but many do get jobs. Women over 50 usually do not. Joey Singer, an American immigrant who serves as community organizer for the four-year-old Association of Ethiopian Immigrants, says there is an attempt to give the women job training and education and help them find work. Bikur Holim Hospital in Jerusalem for example, has a special nursing program for Ethiopian women.

But working at jobs, triggered by the necessity of the family for a second income, plus the exposure to Western values, often lead to a breakdown in family life. This, after the purity issue, is the second most important problem Ethiopian women face, Weil said.

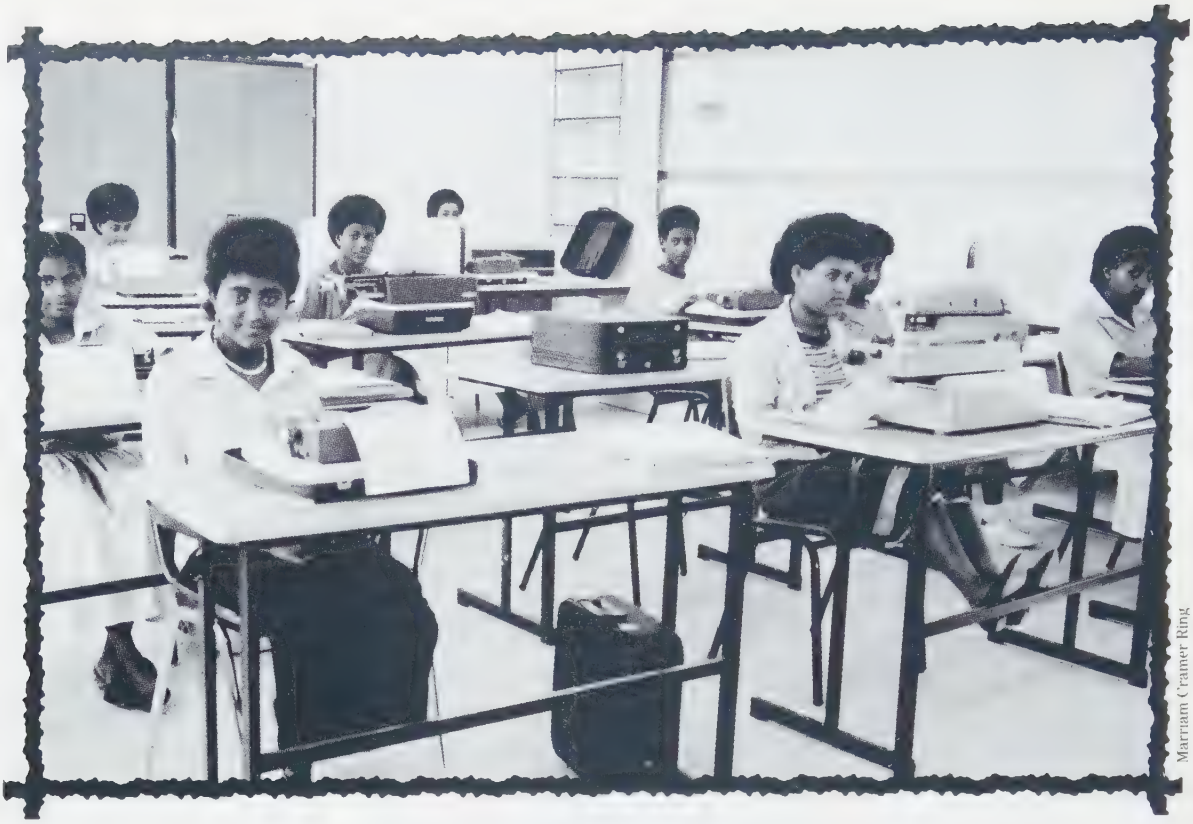
The status of Ethiopian women has always been lower than that of the men, added Mullu. "But here in Israel, they suddenly see that this is not the way it has to be and that they can be equal to men in most ways," in the home as well as the work-place.

"This is very difficult for the husband to take," she continued, "Not only does his wife suddenly do what she wishes without asking his permission, but she also places demands on him to help her around the house and with the children."

Many husbands, unable to deal with their wives' newly discovered identity, outspokeness and independence, become resentful. Some leave their wives—or their wives leave them. There are numerous cases of separation in the Ethiopian community in Israel, something unheard-of in Ethiopia.

"It is not that the Ethiopian woman's role is so low," said Weil, but that in Israeli society the woman's role is being elevated as the male's role is being diminished, and this causes countless problems. The Ethiopian woman's self-image is going up, while her husband's is going down because he feels he is no longer in control."

Another problem for the Ethiopian family is the reversal of roles between parent and child. "In Ethiopia a child never talked back to a parent, the parents' word was holy," says Mullu.



Marriam Cramer Ring

Teenage Ethiopian girls study typing at Kfar HaNoar HaDati High School near Haifa. The girls are eager to study and fit into Israeli life.

"But here, suddenly the children take on the parental role in many ways, since they often understand the language and society best. They bring Israeli social patterns which are foreign to their parents into the house, and this causes further identity crises for both mother and father." Mullu concluded:

"Everything these women have known, their religious life and home life, has broken down," said Mullu. "Suddenly, there are options open to them. This can be freeing—but it can also be frightening."

Israeli society has the greatest impact on the younger generation of Ethiopian women, those still in their teenage years. With most living away from home in Youth Aliyah villages, they are coming into contact 24 hours a day with Israeli culture, said Weil. "The teenage girls there are extremely fashion-conscious and really take getting dressed up seriously. They seem to be modeling themselves after the Israeli female.

"But when you stop to talk to them, you see they are troubled. At 15, many would have been married and had children in Ethiopia; their sexuality is budding and they don't know what to do. They don't know if they should date, or if they should date Israeli or Ethiopian boys."

Resources on Ethiopian Jews and on "Operation Moses" which brought thousands to Israel:

Avraham, Shmuel: Treacherous Journey: My Escape from Ethiopia. New York: Shapolsky, 1986.

Gruber, Ruth: *Rescue: The Exodus of Ethiopian Jews.* New York: Atheneum, 1987.

Kessler, David: *The Falashas: The Forgotten Jews of Ethiopia.* New York: Schocken, 1985.

Levitin, Sonia: *The Return.* New York: Atheneum, 1987 (juv).

Rapoport, Louis: *Redemption Song: The Story of Operation Moses.* New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1986.

A videotape of the classic film study of Ethiopian Jewry, "The Falashas," made by the late author/film-maker Meyer Levin in 1973, can be ordered from Ergo Media, P.O. Box 2037, Teaneck, NJ 07666.

Some of the girls in these schools are, in fact, already married, but told the authorities they were single in order to have the opportunity to study.

Mullu says that her chances of marrying an Ethiopian man are slim because of their closemindedness and lack of acceptance of a modern woman's role in today's society. She suggests workshops and classes that help the men to understand Israeli society.

Despite her successful absorption into Israeli society, Mullu says that she still feels uncomfortable being the only Ethiopian woman to attend Association meetings. Her fellow Ethiopians, she says, are the ones who make things most difficult for her.

"It's hard to be an intelligent and independent Ethiopian woman," she says, in flawless Hebrew. "Most Ethiopians here think that I am weird and abnormal. Maybe in a few years it will be okay, when the men and women alike learn that it's possible for such a woman to still be a good Ethiopian woman.

"I come to them talking about everything, and laughing and they just can't accept that. They still think that a good Ethiopian girl should sit at home and be quiet and shy." ▼

***Andrea King** is a journalist living in Jerusalem.*

This Too Is Enough

They tell a story of the Baal Shem Tov that when he faced a special problem he would go to a place in the forest, light a fire and say a special prayer and God would answer him. When he died his followers forgot how to light the fire, but they went to the place and said the prayer and it was enough. They died, and their disciples went to the forest but they forgot the prayer, and God still answered them. But in the next generation they no longer knew the place. So they told the story and that, too, was enough.

If I am not for me, who?
If I am not for me, how?
If not now, when?
If not here, where?

In the liberal synagogue of Amsterdam
I close my eyes and sway
To the rise and fall of words
These tunes are new to me
The organ alien
Without a book
The syllables lie lumped together
And yet, like the tale
Of the Baal Shem's place in the forest
These pieces are enough

My lover takes my hand
And we move up close
Through the maze of prayers
And abandoned seats
The curtain opens and closes
On stately scrolls
Reclining like matrons
In their silver hung dresses

At the pull of a rope
The arc winks its massive eye of light
These things are enough
But I cannot accept them
This home cannot belong to me

עָלֵינוּ לְשַׁבֵּחַ לַאֲדוֹן הַכֹּל
Let us now praise
The Lord God, King of the universe—
Before our father, our king,
We walked beside the rivers
Of our blessed mother's land
Snakes wound round her arms
Her hands held out fruit
We stood in her garden
And sat below the leaves of her tree
We looked into her mouth
At the night full of stars

TorAH mishnAH mitzvAH KabbalAH
These words a parade of women
Walking at dawn
By the Dead Sea
I have asked rabbis
I have asked scholars
Why the holy words of our fathers
Should end as female
None of them knew
None of them had noticed
"They aren't really feminine"
One tells me
"We only call them that
Endings don't mean anything."

At the messiah's dinner parties
No women sing
They lie in back
Giving birth to sons
The shekinah does not belong to us
She floats like a kite
Above the men who wove her image
Lilith does not belong to us
She crouches
Strong in the bed sheets
Of the frightened men who shaped her

God of our fathers
God of our conquerors
Issuing orders
From behind your curtain
Thicker than death
What have you left for us?
Candles and cooking
Obedience
A law of descent—
These broken shells
Are only fragments
Of a land beyond history

And yet
Without words
Without melodies
Without stories
Without a place that belongs to us
With only a memory
As scattered as dust
We will find our way home again
Like the men
With their tale of the Baal Shem's forest
We will make it enough

Rachel Pollack
(Amsterdam 1984)

Lost Love, 1000 B.C.E.

by Nehama Aschkenasy

In Eve's Journey: Feminine Images in Hebraic Literacy Tradition *(University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), Nehama Aschkenasy traces the development of female images and situations from Biblical writings and* midrashic *(legend) sources, through writings of the Jewish mystics and Hasidic tales, to modern Hebrew works. This analysis of the story of Michal and David by Aschkenasy, Director of the Program in Judaic Studies and Middle East Affairs at the University of Connecticut at Stamford, appears in a different and longer version in her chapter on "Male Tyranny and Women's Sexuality."*

In ancient Israel, female sexuality was the arena in which male authority and patriarchal domination manifested themselves most clearly and oppressively. Woman's sexuality was regarded not so much as part of her feminine being but, rather, as the exclusive property first of her father and then of her husband.

The cultural postulate that the daughter's femininity is the father's property which he can use as a bargaining chip or payment of a debt or compensation for favors is the backdrop for the story of David and Michal in the First Book of Samuel.

This somber ancient tale highlights the tragic predicament of a woman used as a sexual and political pawn by the two men in her life—her father and her husband.

But it also records the story of a woman who dared to love a man in a culture where women's sexual and emotional preferences were regarded as being of no importance.

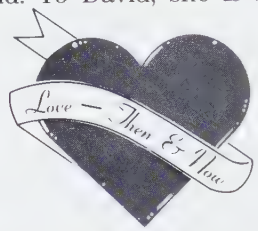
The story begins when King Saul, the unfortunate first monarch of ancient Israel, decides to entrap David, his young armor-bearer and musician, who is increasingly gaining in popularity among the people. As Saul devises a number of schemes to get rid of David, the Bible introduces Saul's daughter, Michal, and a crucial fact: Michal is in love with David.

This piece of information, which colors the whole relationship between David and Michal and foreshadows future events, is unusual, especially if we recall that *this is the only instance in the entire Bible where we are explicitly told that a woman loves a man.*

While the Bible states twice that Michal loves David, it ominously omits David's response. When the ambitious David will finally marry Michal, he will not be motivated by amorous feelings, but by political considerations. In its unromantic nature, the story of Michal and David also sheds new light on the dashing hero, David, whose treatment of Michal is unfeeling and punitive.

Michal is apparently so in love with David that her passion becomes public knowledge, and the word finally reaches her father. From this point on, the story of David and Michal is told in four fragments interlaced with the long narrative of the rise of David and the establishment of his dynasty. Michal appears only on landmark occasions in the hero's progress from lowly armor-bearer to glorious monarch.

Michal seems a doomed woman from the first moment she appears on the scene. To her father, she is an instrument he plans to use to get rid of David. To David, she is no more than the reward due him for his heroic deeds, and a symbol of his rapid climb in the king's court.



Saul first demands a very unusual bride-price, one hundred foreskins of Philistines, in the hope that David will get killed while trying to perform this feat. When David survives, Saul sees in his daughter a spy to help him entrap the young hero.

Michal's initial actions as David's wife display her great love for him as well as her assertive and independent spirit. She defies her father and helps David escape when Saul's men come for him.

Michal emerges in the ensuing events as crafty and quick-witted. She puts a dummy in the bed to mislead Saul's messsengers into believing that David lies there ill, thus allowing him enough time to reach safety. When the ruse is revealed and her father asks for an explanation, Michal quickly answers that she was forced to help David because he threatened her life.

Michal's allegiance is now clear and unequivocal, but the narrator's continued silence regarding David's feelings towards her does not bode well for her future.

The Biblical text now abandons Michal and follows David's career as a fugitive on the run from the wrath of a paranoid king whose world centers on destroying the charistmatic young warrior. The reader is left to wonder about the fate of the clever, enterprising and loving woman who was left behind.

There is a break in Chapter 25 in the narration of the adventures of David the outlaw as we are told about his two new wives. There is also a brief statement that Saul gave his daughter Michal to another man.

While we do not get a direct glimpse of Michal, her compliance or her silence as this transaction goes on points to the metamorphosis that this young woman has probably experienced. Earlier, she had dared to defy her father and blatantly lied to him, yet now she is not recorded as even putting up a fight. She may be disillusioned with David, who did not send for her and has married two other women, or she may have lost her spunk during her long waiting at the home of her obsessed father.

David's reaction to Michal's marriage is, typically, not mentioned, and it was probably non-existent.

When Michal next appears on the scene, she is the typical woman in a patriarchal society: she is being acted upon. The occasion is David's rise to the throne, after the death of King

Saul. Saul's loyalists are now ready to make peace with David who, in turn, demands Michal back. At this sensitive point in David's political career, the return of Michal to his home would mark the final surrender of the former royal family, and serve as a symbol of the consolidation of power in David's hands.

David's claim to Michal is couched in legal, not emotional language: "Deliver me my wife Michal, whom I betrothed to me for a hundred foreskins of Philistines." He wants his wife back not because he loves and misses her, but because she is legally his, and he had paid the bride-price demanded by her father.

Michal's husband cries bitterly as he accompanies his wife to David's place, yet Michal does not say a word and is probably much less heartbroken than her present husband. One might surmise that Michal understands David's motives and does not delude herself as to his feelings towards her. Yet perhaps she still hopes that the long-lost love would be rekindled.

Later, when David dances before the Ark as it is brought into "the City of David," Michal criticizes him for making a spectacle of himself and behaving in an unregal manner. She is now identified as "Michal, the daughter of Saul," which implies her isolation in the court of her father's successor. Michal's words are those of a woman scorned, and they illustrate the last stage in her metamorphosis from David's lover into "Saul's daughter."

The Michal narrative ends with the statement that "Michal, the daughter of Saul had no children to the day of her death." We can interpret the statement about Michal's barrenness in either of two ways. One is as an explanation of what transpired *before* the angry exchange between David and Michal. According to this view, Michal's bitterness towards David is due to the fact that, though he forced her to return to him from her second husband, he did not receive her as a wife but as a symbol of his political triumph. Her acid words thus mark the eruption of the pent-up anger that the humiliated Michal has long felt towards her neglectful husband. Another interpretation of Michal's barrenness is that it occurred *after* their hostile exchange. David withdraws his sexual favors from the woman he never really loved, denying her not only sexual love, but also the only other feminine fulfillment in ancient times, motherhood.

From Alexander Fletcher's Devotional Family Bible (London, 1906)

The Biblical Michal is caught in the power struggle between her paranoid father Saul and her ambitious husband David, for whom she defies patriarchal custom, only to end up scorned and rejected, and childless, too.

The first and last of the four episodes in which Michal appears, while spread out and interspersed in the narrative about David, echo and reverse each other. Both when she makes her first appearance and when she makes her final exit, Michal acts and speaks out. In the middle episodes she is silent and is being acted upon. In her first appearances in the story, Michal is verbal and expressive about and for the sake of her love. In her last scene, she is also outspoken. Yet her cutting sarcasm and acrimonious tirade reveal a tortured woman who no longer shares in her husband's triumphs and joys.

The parallels between the first and the last episode draw our attention to Michal's transformation from a spirited and independent young woman motivated by love and hope to a bitter and neglected wife shrunken in stature and depleted in spirit.

With Michal traveling into a bleak future, childless and loveless, we see clearly a Biblical woman who dared deviate from the feminine role by unabashedly making her desire for a man known, committed herself fully and unequivocally to the choice of her heart—and was condemned for this to a dire and disastrous fate. ▼

Star-Crossed Romance, 1987, N.B.C.

by Naomi Pfefferman

In the 37 years since soap operas have been shown on American television, none of them ever had a Jewish woman character—until NBC's popular "Days of Our Lives" featured the long-running story of Dr. Robin Jacobs and her interfaith romance.

The story line began in January 1986, when Jacobs arrived in "Days" fictitious town, Salem. She was young, Orthodox, serious about Judaism and family. Her father, Eli, and her uncle, Robert LeClair, were Holocaust survivors who argued about God, and who exposed a former Nazi doctor living in Salem.

Robin became chief of surgery at a local hospital, and it was there that she met then-resident Mike Horton, a Protestant *(see photos, facing page)*. The two fell in love—Robin reluctantly, since she could never give up her religion or ever intermarry.

Mike felt love conquered all, but Robin was tormented, torn. She eventually married Mitch Kauffman, a Jewish pharmacist, hoping to forget Mike. (Kauffman even proposed in a *sukkah*.)

But Mike would not give up. He challenged Robin, even as she approached the *chuppah* on her wedding day. And while Robin went through with the wedding, her marriage didn't last. Soon she left Mitch, never having consummated that marriage since she still loved Mike.

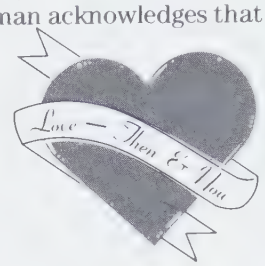
The couple got back together and planned to marry. Mike vowed to convert to Judaism and even began studying Judaism. But Robin still had vague misgivings, reservations. Did Mike really want to be Jewish, or was he converting solely to marry her?

Mike insisted that he cared about Judaism, but one day Robin caught him off-guard. She had been shot and wounded (this was part of another story line), and Mike had just learned she would live. He stopped by the hospital's Christian chapel to pray—as luck would have it, just as Robin was wheeled by. At that point, she realized Mike could never convert—could never truly shed his Protestant roots.

She left the hospital, supposedly for a long recuperation, and never returned. She was, in essence, written off the show—but not before the story had run a year-and-a-half, ending this past June.

The interfaith romance story line was the brainchild of "Days" head writer Leah Laiman, who describes herself as "Orthodoxically inclined." Laiman, 40, was educated at the Orthodox Yeshiva University's Stern College for Women in New York, attends an Orthodox synagogue in Los Angeles, and keeps kosher.

Laiman acknowledges that the story



was rather unconventional for daytime drama, traditionally reserved for WASPs and occasionally some token Blacks. "Days" is almost totally lily white—"we do have a few Catholics and one Black family"—and Laiman dreams of integrating Salem.

How could Laiman work Jews into this quintessential Gentile town? She was quick to answer that many U.S. cities have large Jewish populations, and Jews have become part of the American melting pot. Yiddish words have even made it into Webster's dictionary, so why *not* put Jews on an American soap?

Getting traditional practices right wasn't always easy for the predominantly secular "Days" staff. Viewers complained about details—for instance, about how Sabbath candles were lit from right to left instead of vice-versa. Executive Producer Al Rabin says he once cut a scene when he noticed a *mezzuzah* hanging on the wrong side of a doorway.

Rabin insists that staff members went out of their way to make Dr. Jacobs as authentic as possible even though Derya Ruggles, the actress who played her, isn't Jewish. Michael Weiss, who played Robin's non-Jewish boyfriend, is. Additionally, Robert Clary, the actor who played Robin's Holocaust survivor uncle, Robert LeClair, is himself a survivor of several camps.

When Ruggles had trouble pronouncing Jewish blessings, Rabin brought her tapes from his own synagogue, Valley Beth Shalom in Encino, California. For Robin's wedding, Casting hired Rabbi David Baron from the Synagogue for the Performing Arts in Los Angeles, while Wardrobe ran down to the Fairfax district for a crash course in Jewish wedding garb.

The interfaith romance of Robin and Mike was a risky story and the conversion would have been even riskier, but the audience didn't seem to mind, beyond the occasional anti-Semitic letter.

Laiman, along with Rabin and *Soap Opera Digest*, was frankly surprised by the acceptance. In fact, Laiman says, viewers were *impatient* with the religious issue as just another obstacle toward getting their favorite characters to the church (or in this case, the synagogue) on time.

Laiman enjoys quoting from irate viewer letters: "Why don't you let Robin and Mike get together? If you don't, I'll *never* watch your show again!" And some fans even wrote condoning intermarriage: "I know two people of different religions who lived happily ever after, so why can't you let Robin and Mike live happily ever after?"

There were some friendly, yet serious, office debates about the resolution of Robin's and Mike's romance, with some of Laiman's Christian colleagues being vehemently against the conversion. Laiman says she would never allow an intermarriage on her show. "I don't believe in it," she says vehemently, "and no one would make me do it."

Some fans, along with several of Laiman's Orthodox friends, felt the plot condoned interdating. One Alabama viewer, in a letter to *Soap Opera Digest*, charged that "Days Of Our Lives" approached interdating in a bland nonconfrontational way:

"Mixed marriages," she wrote, "are a difficult social issue. You can't dismiss them with cursory treatment and soulful looks between actors."

Laiman disagrees with this criticism. Religion was quite important to Robin, she says, and was the major obstacle in her starcrossed romance. But she acknowledged "there is a certain blandness about putting *anything* on daytime TV."

Bland or no, since viewers liked Robin and her interfaith romance with Mike, why was she written off the show? And why couldn't Mike convert?

Rabin's reply is that if Mike converted, he and Robin would live happily ever after, and that wouldn't do at all, not in soap opera land. Furthermore, the story had simply played itself out, and it was time for Mike to meet another love interest to keep dramatic tension high.

Laiman, however, tells a slightly different story. She says she had introduced the Robin-Mike story, in outline form, during a "Days" NBC meeting more than a month before the story aired. This was part of "Days" usual routine: Laiman and Rabin meet with network executives every six to eight weeks to discuss story outlines in detail. Present at this meeting from NBC were Libby Beers, director of daytime drama (she also attends weekly "Days" story meetings); Susan Lee, vice president of daytime drama; and Brian Frons, vice president of daytime programs.

The network executives have final say over all "Days" plots. "If they don't like a concept," Laiman says, "I cannot do it." NBC was enthusiastic about the Robin-Mike romance, though Laiman says "there was concern about the conversion from the start."

Courtesy of Rabbi David Baron

Courtesy of Columbia-Embassy Television

The interfaith romance of Drs. Robin Jacobs and Mike Horton (left) was a unique—and risky—story line for NBC's popular soap opera "Days Of Our Lives." The staff went out of its way to ensure authenticity of Orthodox custom, even hiring Rabbi David Baron for Robin's wedding to a Jewish pharmacist (top). The story line ended because the writer wouldn't let Robin intermarry and the network was afraid to let Mike convert.

Apparently, NBC was worried about offending non-Jewish viewers, and about "backing themselves into a corner" with Mike being Jewish forever. "They weren't *against* the conversion," Laiman says, "but as we got closer to the point where Mike would have converted, they did get a little more wary."

At around this point, actress Derya Ruggles, who played Robin, decided to leave the show to pursue other interests, and Laiman didn't feel "Days" could recast her. Laiman adds that Ruggles left before NBC had time to say yes—or no—to Mike's conversion.

"They were nervous but they never actually said no," she continued, "and I don't know if they would have. So when you get right down to it, we'll never know."

Nevertheless, Laiman is disappointed that the Robin-Mike story, conversion and all, did not pan out. There would have been so many possibilities to explore—how Mike would have related to his parents once Jewish; conflicts over child-rearing and over Christmas.

Laiman is also sorry Robin's father and uncle, too, had to leave the show, since there's no point in keeping minor characters around when major ones vanish.

So the Jacobs family is history.

Laiman indicates that the media attention paid to the Robin-Mike story line will make it harder for her to introduce new Jewish characters. She will have to wait awhile—and come up with some innovative stories—before she can bring more Jews on the show.

Nevertheless, Laiman did manage to come up with a story good enough to introduce a Jewish woman into the world of daytime serials, and that, in itself, is an accomplishment.

The Robin story, says Laiman, was special to her—a way to educate non-Jews about Judaism—and it's a first for Jews on soaps. Asked if she considers it—as did some *Soap Opera Digest* writers—a "break-through" of sorts, Laiman hesitates.

"Well," she says laughing, "it may be an aberration, not a breakthrough. They've never done it before—and I don't know if they'll ever do it again."▼

***Naomi Pfefferman** is a staff writer for the* Jewish Journal *of Greater Los Angeles.*

The Prisoners

by Adena Berkowitz

By the time Suri Diamond (not her real name) was pregnant with her second child, she realized that her marriage was disastrous. Suri wanted a civil divorce and hoped that her husband would give her, without too much trouble, a get *(Jewish legal divorce, pl:* gittin*), as well. Little did she know that the process to obtain a* get *would take her more than six years, a struggle which she admits she could not have waged without the support and help of many friends and Jewish communal leaders.*

Within the past decade, with divorce having become part of the American landscape, the Orthodox community and even right-wing Orthodox and Hassidic Jews have been experiencing an increasing number of marriage break-ups.

As more and more Orthodox Jews enter the mainstream of society through employment and social interaction, many Orthodox Jewish women are finding fullfilment not only in their family life but in their professional pursuits as well.

The wish to express themselves and the resulting unwillingness to remain in unhappy marriages as their grandmothers in the *shtetl* (East European townlet) would have been willing to do for the sake of the family, plus the receding of the stigma attached to divorce, has led many to seek civil divorces when counselling and other means of reconciliation fail.

For religious women bound by *halacha* (Jewish law), the necessity of obtaining a *get* is foremost in their mind if they have any intention of remarrying. According to *halacha*, a Jewish marriage comes to an end by the husband giving his wife a *get*, a process only he can carry out [*See LILITH #3, "Jewish Divorce Law: If We Must Part, Let's Part as Equals," by Blu Greenberg.]*

As a result, a too-familiar story has emerged, where for reasons either of vengeance, negotiating strategy, or just downright spitefulness, many men are not giving their wives the *get* that would release the women from their marital bonds. These women are left in a *halachic* state of limbo as *agunot* (chained women), unable to remarry.

Estimates of the number of *agunot* in New York State alone are as high as 15,000.

Many women told me of the pain that they had to endure to obtain their *get*. They spoke of the extortion tactics that their husbands sought to use in agreeing to give a *get*. Many lawyers, as well, have emphasized the unscrupulous tactics of fellow attorneys who use the *get* as a bargaining chip in separation agreements.

The courts in New York took notice of this practice in 1986 when in a landmark decision (*Perl v. Perl*), they set aside a separation agreement and its terms when it became known that the woman had only signed it because her husband threatened to withhold a *get* if she didn't.

The plight of *agunot* became the focus of a conference that New York City Council President Andrew Stein convened in 1986 to acquaint jurists, lawyers and the community at large with the issues surrounding Jewish divorce. At this conference many speakers noted the need for lawyers to explain to their Jewish clients the advisability of obtaining a *get*, even if they were uninterested in one, because of the problems that might arise in the future.

While debate in the Reform movement has swirled around whether

Photos by Marilynne Herbert

# of Divorce

rabbis should urge divorcing congregants to obtain a *get*, Conservative and Orthodox rabbis regard a *get* as mandatory if one wishes to remarry.

There have been many stories of women who upon divorcing their spouses saw no need to obtain a *get*, only to face a situation years later when a potential husband wished to be married by a rabbi who wouldn't perform the ceremony without one. It should also be pointed out here that any children born of a union where a *get* had not been obtained by the woman are considered *mamzerim* (bastards). Such a status, which prohibits these children from marrying anyone except other *mamzerim*, can cause great difficulty for the children especially if in the future they would seek to marry observant partners.

With the upswing in the numbers of both divorces and *agunot*, the issue of *get* has moved to the forefront in the Jewish community.

Long established mainstream groups have begun to take up the plight of *agunot*. In January, 1987, the New York Board of Rabbis, comprising 1000 Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist rabbis, heard its Orthodox President, Rabbi Haskel Lookstein, urge rabbis to call upon their congregants to take action against any person refusing to cooperate in either the giving or receiving of a *get*. Suggested methods included withholding synagogue membership or denying them all synagogal honors—in essence an attempt at old-fashioned ostracism.

More state legislatures are following New York's lead and grappling with laws designed to alleviate the plight of potential *agunot*.

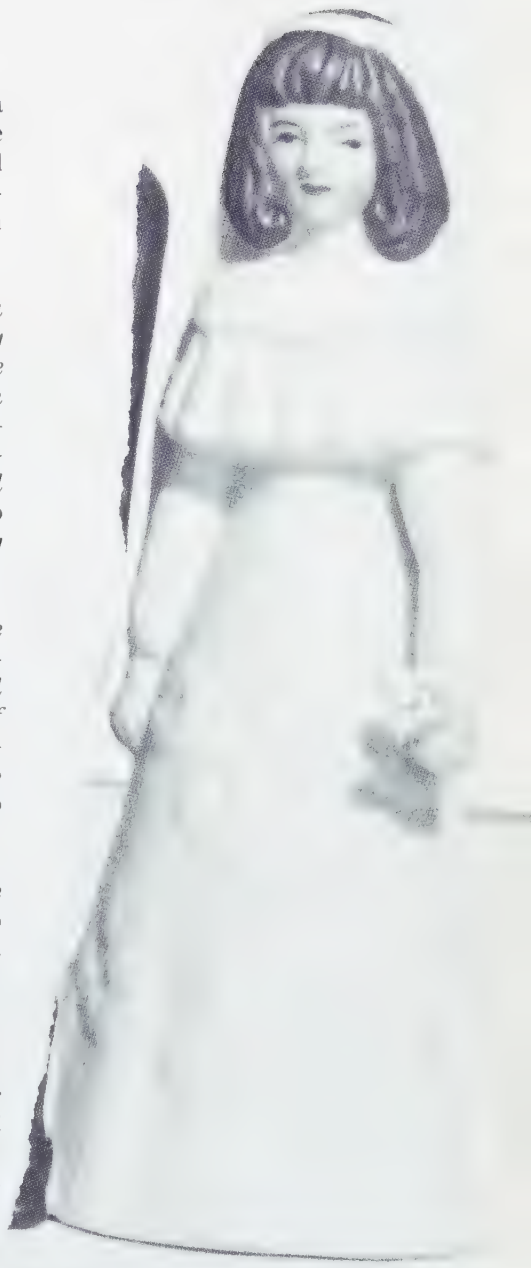
Within Orthodox circles, movement has been slow in grappling *halachically* with this issue. At the same time, a dramatic shift has taken place in the tactics many Orthodox women and their supporters are willing to use—including protest rallies—to obtain *gittin* from recalcitrant husbands.

In 1981, Suri asked her husband for a get, *a request which was summarily rebuffed. Unsure what to do, she turned to the local* Bet Din *(Jewish law court, pl:* Batei Din*) in her Brooklyn community for help. As per proper procedure, the* Bet Din *summoned her husband to appear, to enable it to hear the case. Rather than coming before them, he left the country.*

While civil divorce proceedings were pending, Suri's in-laws became involved in the matter. They threatened to have their son withhold the get *if Suri didn't agree to generous visitation rights, and attempted to kidnap their grandchildren, forcing Suri to obtain a court order of protection.*

While Suri received her civil divorce in 1984, she was still no closer to obtaining her get *than she had been three years earlier.*

Over the course of the next two years, various Batei Din *summoned Mr. Diamond to appear before them for hearings. Time after time he refused to appear or if he did, he stormed out. Court after court found him in contempt, imploring him to grant his wife a* get*—in vain.*



For hundreds of years, in self-governing European Jewish communities where Jewish courts had the power to rule on cases and have their decisions accepted as binding, the *get* issue could often be resolved in a

There are an estimated 15,000 *agunot* in New York State alone.

speedy fashion. While a man must give a *get* of his own free will, as the Talmud in *Yevamot* stated, "we use coercion until he says, 'I want to.'"

Social and economic pressures, including the threat of excommunication, could be brought to bear on men withholding a *get*. Sometimes, following the dictates of Maimonides, who spoke of the evil inclination lurking within these men that had to be beaten out, communities could "convince" them to deliver a *get* to their wives.

Although Jewish courts have been stripped of most of their real power in this post-Emancipation age, religious Jews, bound by *halacha*, accept their jurisdiction and decisions. Moreover, there are sanctions they can impose that can be considered binding, even by the civil courts.

This became a factor in the Conservative movement's attempt to provide a woman with an "enforceable" type of marriage contract.

In 1954, the late Professor Saul Lieberman, the noted Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) Talmudist, devised a clause that could be inserted into the traditional *ketubah* (marriage contract) signed by the bride and groom at their wedding.

According to this "Lieberman Clause," the couple agreed to recognize the *Bet Din* of the JTS as having the authority to counsel them and to summon either partner before it. The party called before the *Bet Din* would be asked to adhere to the terms in the *ketubah*. It was believed that through the clause a party, having promised to live in accordance with Jewish law, could be directed to either give or accept the *get* or pay a fine for not carrying out the *Bet Din's* decision. It was also hoped that, barring voluntary compliance, the *Bet Din*'s decision could be enforced in civil court.

A *ketubah* with the Lieberman Clause became the focus of a watershed court case, *Avitzur v. Avitzur*, that came before the New York courts in the early 1980's (*see box*). After years of litigation, the Court of Appeals ruled that the *ketubah* containing the Lieberman Clause could be enforced in civil court, holding it to be like any enforceable arbitration clause.

As an outgrowth of the Avitzur case, Assemblyman Sheldon Silver introduced a *Get* Bill into the New York State Legislature. The bill required the plaintiff in a divorce action to sign an affidavit swearing that he/she had removed *all* barriers to his/her spouse's remarriage. This implied the granting or accepting of a *get*, but purposely avoided using the word.

The American Jewish Congress and the (Reform) Union of American Hebrew Congregations urged Governor Mario Cuomo of New York to veto the bill on constitutional grounds. The JTS and the right-wing Orthodox Agudath Israel favored it, arguing that under Jewish law, the granting of a *get* was a civil rather than a religious act and therefore posed no church-state problem.

Others argued that the *Get* Bill's requirement that the clergyperson who had married the couple attest to the *get's* having been given was no more "excessive entanglement" of church and state than the state's having delegated the authority to him or her to marry the couple in the first place.

Governor Cuomo signed the bill into New York law in August 1983. The *Get* Bill as worded, however, only requires the *plaintiff* in the divorce action to sign the attestation described above.

Thus it would be of little help to women suing for divorce whose husbands have refused to give them the *get*, because in such cases it is the husbands who are the *defendants* in the action (and hence not required to sign the affidavit). Yet many attorneys have pointed out that women are protected because in many cases a husband will counterclaim, thus requiring him to sign the affidavit after all before the divorce can be final.

A number of other states as well as Canada considering similar *get* legislation have sought to draft slightly different versions to alleviate some of the problems raised in the New York Statute.

One noteworthy example is that of a bill passed in the Canadian province of Ontario in 1985, with the unanimous support of the entire Jewish community, from Orthodox to Reform rabbinic and secular groups.

The Canadian version differs in several respects from its New York counterpart. One of them is that it calls on the spouse applying for *or responding* to an application for property division or financial support to complete an affidavit that all barriers to remarriage had been removed (a reference to the *get*). This provision increased the number of women who could receive relief.

Nevertheless, there are still women who fall through the cracks; women for whom the *get* laws are of little help; women who were already civilly divorced before these became law and

are still waiting to receive a Jewish bill of divorce.

Suri was desperate for results and she turned to a group of women who had formed an informal organization, "The Committee to Free Agunot." *Seeking to pressure Suri's in-laws, these women contacted them and indicated that if a* get *was not granted, demonstrations would commence outside their place of business. What was now a private matter would soon become public knowledge within the community at large.*

With the in-laws warning that such action would only delay delivery of a get, *the plans dissolved. But the in-laws promised that their son would appear before the* Bet Din *and Suri hoped that her days as an* agunah *would soon be over.*

Her hopes were dashed when, after failing to appear before the Bet Din, *her husband disappeared.*

By Spring 1986—five years after Suri had first tried to get *obtain a* get—*she realized that the time for public action had arrived. With help from the Committee to Free* Agunot, *local residents and rabbis, a new, aggressive campaign was launched on her behalf.*

On a bright sunny day in May, over 200 people gathered in front of her in-laws' house in Boro Park, Brooklyn. People had been drawn to the rally by word of mouth, posters in the neighborhood, and announcements from sound trucks.

The men standing on one side of the street and the women on the other heard a shocking tale of suffering and abuse taking place right within their own midst; rabbi after rabbi spoke of the shame that this man had brought to the community.

*One speaker called on community members to voice their outrage at the plight of a person who, akin to a prisoner, was deserving of help: The "*Mitzvah *of* Pidyon Shivuyim*" requires the community to save one of their own.*

The rallies and demonstrations went on for several weeks. Suri's husband had fled the city for another town but one of the members of that community recognized the man's name from news of the demonstrations and got in touch with Suri.

Based on that tip, Suri went there with a group of rabbis, hoping to convince her husband to grant the get. *Only after several trips with rabbinic witnesses and a scribe—the final one involving eight hours of rabbinic convincing—did her husband finally relent.*

Six years after Suri had first approached her husband for a get, *she finally received it.*

Along with the movements in the courts and legislations, another aspect of the *get* issue has been the increasing radicalization of the Orthodox community. In the past ten years, various groups have formed to alleviate the plight of *agunot* and help them obtain a *get*.

Increasingly, rallies and other forms of communal pressure are being brought to bear on recalcitrant husbands. In Los Angeles recently, community centers were plastered with posters showing a man's face, giving his name and stating that he refused to give his wife a *get*. In one community in Canada, a group of women united in their refusal to go to the *mikvah* until a particular husband relented in his demand for $25,000 in return for giving his wife a *get*. (*Mikvah* is a prerequisite for the resumption of a couple's sexual relations after the mandated menstrual separation.)

The hope is that these types of activities will act as a deterrent to poten-

The Avitzur v. Avitzur Case

Susan Avitzur married Boaz Avitzur in 1966 in a ceremony utilizing the Conservative *ketubah* which contained the Lieberman Clause.

She divorced her husband civilly in 1978. As called for in her *ketubah*, she asked Boaz for a *get* and when he refused, she turned to the *Bet Din* of the Jewish Theological Seminary to have it compel him to appear. He refused. She turned to the New York Supreme Court for help in ordering him to appear at a *Bet Din*.

Boaz Avitzur argued that a court order compelling him to appear before a *religious* tribunal would involve excessive engagement in what he termed a religious matter, and hence, would violate the separation of church and state.

The court rejected his constitutional objections and he was ordered to adhere to the procedure he had promised to abide by in his marriage contract.

The Appellate Division reversed this decision, noting that it would be a dangerous precedent to allow a state court to enforce what they viewed as a religious requirement.

In 1983, Susan Avitzur appealed the decision to the New York Court of Appeals. In a 4-3 decision, the jurists held that there was no judicial or constitutional objection to compelling Boaz Avitzur to live up to the terms of the *ketubah*.

Although the agreement was entered into as part of a religious ceremony, the court decided to treat the Lieberman Clause in the *ketubah* as akin to an agreed arbitration clause. Boaz Avitzur appealed to the United States Supreme Court, but it refused to hear the case.

The Court of Appeals decision led to the matter being returned to trial for determination of the factual and legal meaning of the *ketubah* itself. During the course of pre-trial procedures, Susan Avitzur abandoned the lawsuit for what her attorney Richard Hanft—who had handled the entire case on a pro bono basis—explained were personal reasons, which included the protracted length of the proceedings. To date, Susan Avitzur has not received her *get*.

tially recalcitrant husbands. Said a long-time resident of Boro Park: "The time has come where the *frum* (religious) community is saying that it is so outraged at the behavior of some of its own that they now feel the need to go public with it. People do not want to remain silent any more."

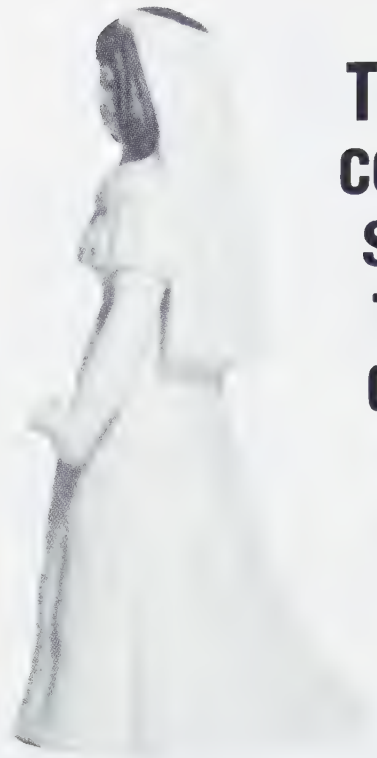
The Orthodox community has turned to both public action of this nature on the one hand and support of *get* legislation on the other for two reasons. One is its inability to coalesce a *halachic* solution to the *get/agunah* problem because of what Susan Alter, founder of Agunah, Inc. (*see box*), calls the "meekness" of Orthodox figures in dealing with this issue.

The second reason is its refusal to accept solutions adopted by the Conservative movement which many feel are viable *halachic* means to solve the problem. They have been rejected by the Orthodox because of their Conservative sponsorship—another negative by-product of the acrimonious infighting and power struggles among the different denominations in American Jewry.

At the time the Lieberman Clause was initiated, many members of the Orthodox community criticized it on technical *halachic* grounds. But most observers agreed that political issues lay behind the heavy-handed criticism. There was, at that time, an attempt to organize a joint Orthodox-Conservative *Bet Din*, and religious rightists were not eager for such a union. They eventually killed the project, and it is unlikely to come to fruition in the near future.

Within Conservative ranks, the objections to the Lieberman Clause were primarily psychological. Many rabbis felt that couples on their wedding day would balk at discussing and signing a *ketubah* which contains a clause implying the possibility of divorce.

In fact, the traditional *ketubah* already implies the obligation a husband has to his wife in the event of divorce, but often, when no translation from the Aramaic is read at the wedding, those passages can remain obscure. Moreover, the psychological objection to the clause has lost its impact in today's divorce-prone society, though it remains unclear how many Conservative rabbis actually use the *ketubah* containing it.



The religious community is so outraged that people do not want to remain silent any more.

In the late 1960's, Rabbi Edward Gershfield of the Jewish Theological Seminary prepared a pre-nuptial agreement to be signed by a couple which called on the husband to promise to deliver a *get* if the marriage ended in divorce. If no *get* was delivered within six months of the granting of the civil divorce, the *Bet Din* declared the marriage null and void.

By the early 1970's, another method of *Havka'at Kiddushin* (annulling the marriage) was utilized. This procedure—which has been used only as a last resort in problem cases—is based on the concept that at every wedding ceremony the betrothal formula that a man recites acknowledges that he is marrying his wife "according to the laws of Moses and Israel."

Implicit in these words is that the rabbis (in the broadest sense) are giving their consent and sanction to this marriage. Hence, if the original basis upon which consent was granted has changed (i.e., the adherence to *halacha*, which includes ending a marriage with a *get*) the rabbis can retroactively withdraw their approval of the marriage by annulling it. To actually proceed with this method would require a woman to go before the JTS *Bet Din* with proof of a civil divorce and proof of the complete failure to obtain a *get* from her recalcitrant husband.

The Reconstructionist movement has allowed women to initiate the giving of a *get*. Furthermore, in 1980 they convened a *Bet Din* (which included a woman among its members) that issued a *shtar piturim*, a document freeing the woman in question to remarry even though neither a *get* was obtained nor the marriage annulled. These innovations have not been accepted by either the Orthodox or Conservative movements.

Within the Orthodox community, controversy has swirled not only around acceptance of *gittin* prepared under Conservative auspices and the advisability of turning to civil authorities for help, but also on the question of encouraging the use of pre-nuptial agreements.

In an interview published in the spring 1981 *Response*, Rabbi Saul Berman predicted that the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA) as well as Agudath Israel would devise a means to help *agunot* and prevent the *aguna* problem from arising in the first place.

By the fall of 1983, the RCA had prepared a version of a pre-nuptial agreement which obligated the bridegroom to issue a *get* and the bride to accept it within 30 days after the receipt of a civil divorce. The RCA *Bet Din* could impose a $250 a day

liquidated damage clause (similar to a fine) on either party who refused to comply when requested. Imposing such fines remains controversial on secular legal grounds and potentially on *halachic* grounds.

For reasons that are still unclear, the RCA pre-nuptial agreement was withdrawn, and institutional Orthodoxy remains without one. Various rabbis and scholars have continued to proffer their own versions. For example, Rabbi J. D. Bleich, Rosh Yeshiva at Yeshiva University, devised a pre-nuptial agreement that obligates the husband upon marriage to provide his wife with either room and board or $250 a day. It assumes that the wife would demand the *per diem* sum only if the marriage ended and she did not receive her *get*.

Rabbi Moshe Tendler also of YU devised a document to be signed at a wedding which merely translates into English the requirements that a husband has towards his wife that are found in the *ketubah*: "to care for and feed my wife in accordance with Jewish law." This agreement obligates the husband to support his wife in the style to which she is accustomed until she receives her *get*. Rabbi Tendler views this as separate from any support payments that could be imposed by a civil court.

It is clear that within the last 10 years the Jewish community has become much more sensitized to the troubling *get* issue and the heartbreak of so many *agunot*. However, a *halachic* solution capable of solving future problems and accepted by all, seems far away. Pressure should be brought to bear on those who fail to utilize *halachic* methods that are currently available to solve this problem.

Meanwhile, what hope is there for *agunot*?

First of all, much can be learned from close-knit Jewish communities which impose communal sanctions on men who keep their wives in *halachic* limbo. The larger community should adopt these methods and impose its own ban on working with—and honoring—individuals who refuse to give or accept a *get*.

Second, there are the courts. Many religious women have turned in desperation to secular courts to adjudicate disputes that might be better suited to be heard and dealt with inside the Jewish community. While some object on constitutional grounds to the spectre of the secular courts becoming involved in this issue, access to the courts in certain cases can bring about a successful conclusion.

Finally, most lawyers stress the importance of pre-nuptial agreements with provisions about *get* as a safeguard to avoid couples contemplating divorce having to face the thorny issue of *get* at a time when feelings are bitter and emotions raw. Said one lawyer:

"Heaven forbid one should think that divorce is as inevitable as death. But today, getting married without such a pre-nuptial agreement is akin to going through life without a will." ▼

***Adena Berkowitz**, a New York lawyer, is a frequent writer on Jewish issues. She is currently completing her doctorate in Ethics and Philosophy at the Jewish Theological Seminary. This article is excerpted from an unpublished study on "Divorce and the Jewish Community."*

For Help in Obtaining A Jewish Divorce:

- **GET Organization**
  POB 300131
  Brooklyn NY 11230
  (718) 871-3407

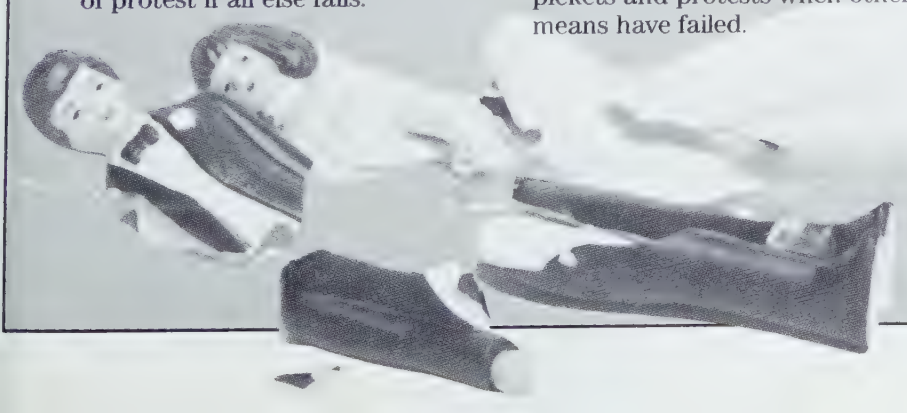
GET (Getting Equitable Treatment) helps women and men obtain Jewish divorces from men unwilling to comply and women unwilling to accept. GET has volunteer caseworkers as well as legal and *halachic* consultants. While GET seeks to utilize behind the scenes pressure, it will resort to more public means of protest if all else fails.

- **Agunah, Inc.**
  463 East 19th Street
  Brooklyn NY 11226
  (718) 859-4887 (days)

Agunah, Inc. provides a comprehensive list of organizations ranging from those providing psychological counseling to financial aid to women seeking a *get*. It pressures the Orthodox rabbinate to publicly acknowledge the problem and the failure in many cases to utilize Jewish law to solve problems; and pickets and protests when other means have failed.

- **KAYAMA**
  POB 4007
  College Point NY 11356
  (718) 544-0357

KAYAMA, a volunteer non-profit group, seeks to educate couples about the importance of a *get* and explains its procedures. In the event of financial difficulty, it helps defray the cost of obtaining the *get*. KAYAMA relies on Orthodox *Batei Din* to resolve conflicts and on Orthodox authorities to write the actual *get*.



WANDERINGS

A Short Story by Susan Gross

Fraida wanders.

She walks in the shade of a freeway offramp, on a sidewalk strewn with pebbles, broken glass, and dandelions. Across the street there is a row of crumbling houses. Aaron peeks out of a crack in a boarded up window. His expression is hard to read because from this distance his full gray beard seems to cover his mouth and ring his eyes. He looks down, and a half-moon of his yarmulke is visible above his forehead.

She sees Aaron also in the street coming towards her. He walks on the white lines. A child holds his hand and takes twice as many steps as he in order to keep pace.

Danielle, Fraida's only child, lives in Dallas with her husband and two young daughters. She has urged Fraida to settle in Texas with them. But Fraida cannot move. She is too old. And moving with all of her possessions from Hawthorne, California halfway across the country would be impossible. And even if it could be accomplished, she would not live long enough to make it worthwhile. These are the arguments she presents to Danielle.

The Aaron in the middle of the street draws closer. Fraida can see that the child he tows at his side is a very young Danielle. The two of them are dressed up as if on their way to synagogue.

Fraida's family landed in America in 1835. She heard the details of her ancestors' life on the Lower East Side from her grandmother who remembered *her* grandmother, the one who crossed. The places and dates and genealogy were drummed into Fraida's memory as effectively as the Sunday School teachers imparted their litanies: Abraham was the father of Isaac who was the father of Jacob ....

Grandmother's grandmother was the first to set up a home in America. Her husband peddled. They lived on the second floor of a four-story house, and it seemed to them that they had more living space than existed in all of Germany.

Their sons, one by one, peddled, too. Business was good and they needed another son.

What about the daughters? Fraida wondered. Their histories were not retold, even when the storytellers were women.

The next generation of men owned a store, above Wall Street.

Fraida's father was a middle child, born just after the store closed and his uncles all disbanded. He became a rabbi, the first one in the family, and the poorest son.

Fraida remembers hating him from the time that she was old enough to realize she didn't have to love him. She hated how he kept himself apart from the rest of the people in the city, how everything—even trash in the gutter—was somehow, mystically holy to him. It seemed to her a silly creed, but she learned it as an absolute: the world was holy and men must keep it holy, and God was to be revered for making it holy, and women must raise holy children.

Then came Aaron. He was much like her father in his piety, yet so different in his youth and vibrancy. He recited the same morning prayers that her father recited; yet when her father davened the words sounded ancient and absurd, and when Aaron davened the words were not just words but songs of praise and beauty.

"He was an excellent man, your father."

"Do you know what he thanked God for every morning of his adult life?" Danielle screeches.

"So he was very religious. It doesn't bother me. If I were more religious I would probably wake up and thank God for not creating me a man. Tit for tat."

"Do you think he believed it, Mom?"

"No. It was hard enough for him to believe in God after what he saw in Europe, let alone that God created men better than women."

Aaron and Fraida rejoiced when their child was born, a daughter, Danielle. And then a horrendous thing happened. Fraida could not have expected it because she had scarcely even heard about such things: she found bloody clumps in her panties and she couldn't get pregnant any more. She stopped going to the *mikvah* at the age of 30. She was struck by the arbitrary nature of fertility. The laments of the barren Biblical women settled in her throat. She hadn't thought she cared so much for children. But what was she supposed to do if not suckle them and wean them and raise them? She had no idea.

She mourned in shul. She sat with the women on one side of the sanctuary. It was difficult to see the Torah on

the other side, where the men sat. It was also hard to hear the prayers because children were playing noisily on the floor and women were talking to each other. Fraida tried to keep her mind off all the children she would never have as she sat in her hard folding chair, clutching her prayer book.

At least she had Danielle. She found herself breathing for Danielle when the baby had a cold, and running for Danielle when the baby could only crawl. Soon she was so intertwined with Danielle that the baby almost became the mother and the mother the baby.

A part of Fraida wished she were on the other side of the curtain, immersed in the liturgy (since she could no longer be immersed in the water). For the men, it was a mitzvah to be here praying—they derived joy from obeying this commandment. But God did not obligate women to attend shul. (Fraida remembered her mother telling her when she was very young that the reason women were excluded was that the very act of being female was obligation enough. One could not be expected to be engaged in prayer and to be a woman at the same time! "But I can do two things at once," Fraida had protested. "Look." She had galloped around the apartment while reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, and her mother had laughed.)

She still misses Aaron and imagines him on every street corner. But in life he would not have been found on these streets. He stayed close to his shul, his jewelry store, and his home. And she stayed by his side for the 40-odd years they were married. She is startled that the number of anniversaries they shared does not come to mind easily. Forty-two, it must have been.

She emerges from the shade of the ramp. The freeway arcs away to the north but the sidewalk continues to the west. The ramshackle houses thin out and give way to weedy fields bordered by chainlink fences and barbed wire.

"Why?" Danielle asks.

"Because I'm not confronted with myself. Everything is new and different."

"You'll get mugged or killed," Danielle often tells her, not harshly but in the way that a mother speaks to a small child.

"I don't go at night. I don't go in the very, very bad sections," Fraida tries to defend herself.

"If you're in any part of L.A. at all it's the slums. It's all slummy. What's wrong with Hawthorne, Mom? It's a decent little suburb. Why don't you just stay in Hawthorne?"

"I've seen Hawthorne. There's nothing new to see."

"Everything would be new in Texas."

"I don't want to be a burden to you," Fraida always tells her daughter.

"What kind of behavior is that just to wander around the streets of a slum?"

"It's very interesting for me. And it doesn't cost anything. Tell me, how are the girls?" Fraida can usually change the subject in less than a minute.

Aaron arranges flowers in a shop window on the corner. He fluffs great horseshoes of orange and white chrysanthemums. His hands seem weightless, so delicate is his caress of the blossoms. He does not look up from his task as Fraida passes.

Her feet ache. The joints of her toes on her left foot smart as she lifts them with every other step. Time to return to her car. She rounds the next corner and puts a hand to her forehead to shield her eyes from the late afternoon, mid-March sun.

When she gets home, the phone is ringing. Danielle.

"You were out walking?" Danielle shrieks. Fraida does not like what the telephone does to Danielle's voice. "Mother, it's dark. I know you're two hours earlier there, but it must be very dark."

"It wasn't dark when I was walking. It's hardly dark now. If you go outside you can still see streaks of light in the clouds. It's called 'between the evenings': after the sun has set but before three stars have come out. You were born then. Your father said he was glad you weren't a boy because he never would have known what day to have the *bris*."

"I don't think he was ever glad I wasn't a boy," Danielle laughs. "Don't walk in the dark by yourself, Mom. I could kill him for dying and leaving you alone."

"What? Don't joke. Don't hate him, either. It hurts me. I made the same mistake with my father. And anyway it hurts me to think that you hate somebody I love. Loved, I should say. How are the girls?"

"Beautiful. Sharon ate her diaper and Marsha crayoned a picture into the couch. What I want to know is: Is there any way to give them back? I've changed my mind, God, take them. Whoever said I wanted children, anyway? It's an old notion that we have to have children—somewhere in the Bible. We don't believe in that anymore."

"Danielle, your jokes," Fraida sighs.

On the first day of Spring Fraida takes a carload of empty cartons home from the grocery store. Whole sections of the house are brimming with things she never uses anymore—the rickety metal bookstand crammed with cookbooks and newspaper clippings, the hall closet and its mounds of linen, the cupboards above the refrigerator full of candy dishes and ashtrays, Aaron's chest of drawers. What has she been waiting for?

She begins in the kitchen. She opens the cupboard under the stove and finds a set of cast iron pots she had forgotten about. They are black and flecked with rust. She lifts a small saucepan into the carton. How heavy it is for such a small pot. An image of melted cheese sticking to the inside of the pot pushes its way to the front of her memory. One evening, long ago, she had spent an hour trying to scrape this pot clean.

She fills up the rest of the first carton with plastic picnicware—a gift from forgotten friends. These items were never used. It occurs to her, though, that perhaps she should go on saving some of this for Danielle. Maybe

Marianne Matte

there is value in saving, just for saving's sake. Maybe Danielle would be amused to pick her way through the house (after Fraida is dead) and discover these things, and walk off with them into her own life, and be able to use them in ways Fraida can't think of.

Surely Danielle has better things to do, Fraida thinks, and she resumes the harvesting of her cupboards. She leaves herself with only the pans and utensils she uses everyday. She packs away the clutter: the mugs with advertising written on them, the wineglasses with overly delicate stems, the tarnished silver trivets, the endless stock of vases ... somebody somewhere will love these things. She is performing quite a mitzvah to give it all away, even though the deeper she goes the greater is her dislike of these objects. It is no sacrifice to part with them.

The first year that she and Aaron lived in the love nest on Bush Street, New York had a late Spring. But Pesach demanded that the apartment undergo a Spring cleaning nevertheless. She cleaned and cleaned. There wasn't any dirt because they had lived there such a short time, but she cleaned anyway. The floors were polished, the carpets were raked, the windows were made into mirrors (they were that clean). Fraida had to purposely crumble a wad of stale bread onto the floor so that she would have something to sweep when she acted out the candle and feather ritual.

The apartment was dim and draped with flickering shadows. Fraida clutched the elaborate candleholder her mother-in-law had given her. The flame fanned out in back of the wick as she moved around the room—it looked like the candle was wearing a scarf held aloft by the wind. In her other hand she held a tiny paper sack and a long, broad feather. In the dimness Fraida could not see Aaron's face, but she could hear his incantations. And she could make out his arm when he pointed down to the floor, indicating that it was time for her to stoop and sweep.

She knelt down and set the candle on the floor. The flame settled in on the wick, and the apartment grew even dimmer. She opened the sack. The sound of its quiet crackling exploded in the still room and seemed as if it could deafen them. She placed the tip of the feather to the floor and with it tried to sweep the breadcrumbs into the sack. But the crumbs adhered to the carpet. She smiled up at Aaron, whose face she couldn't see. She tried brushing at the crumbs with the feather turned lengthwise, but the crumbs still didn't move.

"Hmm," she purred. She returned to the crumbs later with the carpet sweeper.

Somehow when they moved to California, the ritual was left behind.

Fraida steeps a cup of tea and sips it. She walks with her mug into the master bedroom. Aaron's chest of drawers takes up most of the wall adjacent to the doorway. She rests an elbow on top of it, and sips, and sips. When the mug is empty, she places it on top of the chest. The chest has been there and yet it hasn't, for she hasn't given it a thought, much less touched it, until now. My God, what have I been waiting for, she asks herself.

The top drawer slides open. It is a shallow drawer, separated into three compartments. Tie clips, *tallis* clasps, spare yarmulkes, cufflinks, coins, blank scraps of paper—all scrupulously arranged. Fraida picks out one of the cufflinks and turns it over in her palm. It does not hurt.

She moves down through the drawers. She holds a pair of his socks without flinching. She runs her fingers along the pattern on his flannel shirt and feels only warmth, not pain. She wants to know if she can conjure up a picture of Aaron wearing these things and still not cry. But she can't see him. It is as if with the concrete relics of his life in her hands there is no purpose in imagining an Aaron who isn't here anymore. She can't see him, and she doesn't miss him. She hugs the shirt.

Lacking empty cartons, she begins a give-away pile on top of the bed. She refolds the flannel shirt and smooths the wrinkles. On top of it she puts another shirt, and another. There are buttons missing—maybe at the bottom of the drawer?—she should sew them back on for the thrift shop women. She is glad she kept these things until now, and glad that she no longer needs to keep them.

"Get rid of everything, fast. It will be so much easier for you that way. Otherwise, every time you come in this room the knife will turn in your stomach. Let me pack for you."

But Fraida didn't let Danielle take anything.

The pile on the bed grows. Fraida has to go out for some more cartons or she won't have anywhere to sleep tonight. She would like to get a candle-holder and feather too, she decides. Such an inane custom, yet backed by three thousand years of history. If it's a tradition then it can't be called inane, she thinks.

She drives to the grocery store, to the loading docks in the back, and helps herself to another carload of cartons.

Instead of making the turn for home she continues down the main boulevard towards the freeway. What is so inane about a walk now and then in a neighborhood where nobody knows her?

She parks her box-filled car near the ocean, near sunset, in a parking lot that is thinning out. She watches two young men in glistening black wetsuits strap their surfboards to the top of their car. Fraida sits with her elbows on the steering wheel. The sun is low enough to have its reflection scattered by the water, which looks golden. Fraida picks out a cluster of small dark shapes floating close to the sand—birds, so still and in synchrony with the waves' cresting.

Fraida is tired. How unexpected, she muses. She has never been tired on the brink of a walk. Yet now she is content sitting here, just looking, watching slow undula-

tions. "Oh, come," she says to herself. She flings open the car door and gets out.

She breathes in the fishy air which rushes at her in stiff gusts. She walks into the wind. Her legs move slowly. "Come," she urges. There is a narrow, sand-strewn sidewalk running between the asphalt of the parking lot and the beach; she takes it south. The setting sun gnaws at the right corner of her right eye. She holds up her hand to blot it out.

There is no one on the beach. Fraida sees nothing but vacant sand, punctuated by aluminum cans, cigarettes, black-green seaweed fronds. There are some body surfers in the water, too far away to be seen clearly. A jogger thumps up from behind her and passes her, kicking up pinwheels of sand.

Another jogger approaches, this time towards Fraida. He trails a long leash behind him and a golden retriever, loping gracefully. "It is nice here," Fraida says to herself. "Aaron should be here."

She expects him to appear any minute. Maybe he is in the water? No, she doesn't see anyone there now. Maybe on the sand, lounging on a towel? No. Climbing through the rocks, then, or gathering shell shards just off the sidewalk?

He is nowhere. Nowhere at all, she marvels. She just isn't functioning today. Her legs so tired, her mind so unimaginative. She wants to conjure him up. She is lonely without him. For God's sake, why can't he be here?

She walks on. Fraida looks across the terrain and spies the highway far away to the left. Beyond it are shops with their signs lit. Yes, it is dark enough for the signs to be on. She turns around.

The red sun now rests on a wavering bed of haze just above the horizon. She walks slowly, too slowly. She tries to coax her legs to pick up the pace. But the harder she concentrates on going faster, the slower it seems she goes. The wind is strong, pushing her back. The weakness of her own muscles frightens her. She must have exerted herself too much earlier today with the cartons. That's all, a simple explanation, she tells herself. The fear lingers, though.

"All right, on, on," she says.

She gazes out to the ocean. How dark it has become. The red ball has vanished. Faint pink-gray streaks, like watercolors thinly applied to canvas, hang over the dark water. The sand has gone from rust to gray. The rock-strewn hill is almost black.

Above the sound of the whitecaps crashing is the pit-pat of another set of footsteps, coming from in back of her. The footfalls come slowly, matching her own slow steps. Aaron at last! she thinks, and she whirls around. But it isn't Aaron. All she can make out is a cloudy figure, about ten paces behind her. It is a man with his head bent down. He wears a great black coat.

She wishes he would pass her. She purposely slows her steps so that she barely creeps forward. "Come on then, pass." She listens for the sound of his footsteps coming closer. But he keeps his distance.

"Oh, God, I'm going to die," she thinks all at once. He is following her. He is here to do her harm. It is dark, and she is alone. How did it get so dark so fast? Where is the parking lot? She didn't walk this far, did she? She must have passed the lot. No, she couldn't have missed it .... Should she run? God, she can't make her legs run. She tries to run, but she can't. God! she thinks.

She plods forward. Suppose she were to stop in her tracks? Should she just stop? Let him come, do what he has in mind to do. Perhaps he'll be after only money. She has nothing with her. Let him see that and move on. Or should she scream? Perhaps there is still someone on the beach somewhere.

"Stop following me!" she is about to scream to the man in back of her, when she sees a light ahead. The parking lot. Just a few more steps and she'll be there. And she will never do this again. If she doesn't die tonight, she promises God, she will never be such a fool again. She doesn't want to die.

What she wants is to live, to be alive with Aaron, and with Danielle small again, and with her own strong arms and legs again, being young and needed. But even without the rest, she wants to live.

She plods into the beam of amber light thrown down by the streetlamp in the parking lot. She rushes to her car, the only one left in the lot. She turns the key in the door, dives inside, and locks her door again.

The silence engulfs her. She had not realized during her walk how loud was the beating of the waves and the drumming of the wind against her ears. She looks out through the windshield at the amber parking lot and the complete blackness beyond. The man must have kept on walking. Thank God, she thinks, and she begins to sob.

She slumps over the steering wheel and lets her tears fall, rapid-fire, into her lap. Aaron is the one making her cry. She grieves for him as if he died yesterday. He always took her everywhere—even to shul where women weren't supposed to be—so why couldn't he have taken her with him this time? What was she supposed to do without him? Who was she supposed to cook for and garden for? She moans, and the sounds she makes echo off of the cartons in the backseat. She sobs for hours, half the night.

When she is done, she starts the car. Her mind fills up with the minutia of the freeway: the green and white signs, the car ahead with its broken taillight, the exit ramp. At home she sees that the night isn't half gone after all. It is only nine o'clock.

She takes a cheese sandwich and milk from the refrigerator, and eats and drinks.

In the bedroom she moves the stack of clothing from the top of her bed to the floor, and climbs between the covers. ▼

Susan Gross, *a former journalist, is currently working on a collection of* midrash *about the wives of Lot and Job. She lives in Louisiana with her husband and two young daughters.*

RESCUERS

Anne Frank-Fonds/Cosmopress, Genève

Anne Frank

by Eva Fogelman

Miep Gies

"I am not a hero.... Never a day goes by that I do not think about what happened then.... I willingly did what I could to help.... It was not enough."

So begins the memoir of Miep Gies, the woman who, along with her husband, Jan, and several friends, risked her life to hide and care for the Frank family, the van Daans, and later, Albert Dussel, in the now famous "Secret Annex" on Prinsengracht Canal in Amsterdam, described by Anne Frank in her Diary.

Miep Gies' *Anne Frank Remembered* stands side by side with *The Diary of a Young Girl* as testament to the nobility of the human spirit. But the power of these sister texts to move us lies not in an evocation of either martyrdom or sainthood, but of simple human caring.

For two harrowing years, from July 6, 1942 until August 4, 1944—when a Dutch informer tipped off the Gestapo for the usual reward of five gulden (about $1.40) per Jew—Miep and her circle protected their eight Jewish friends from the Nazis.

Miep befriended shopkeepers and acquired illegal ration cards; she traveled miles into the countryside, risking the possibility of arrest by violating curfew. Daily, she and Jan, Jo Koophuis, Victor Kraler and Eli Vossen brought food, gifts, news of the outside world, and most important—hope—to the warehouse attic.

Miep Gies with Alison Leslie Gold: Anne Frank Remembered. *New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987.*

It is estimated that 24,000 of the 140,000 Jews living in Holland during the occupation were hidden by Dutch people. Only 16,000 of these Jews survived; the rest, like the inhabitants of the "secret annex," were caught by the Nazis, and deported.

In simple, but feeling prose, *Anne Frank Remembered* reveals not just the actions, but the character of one woman who chose to commit herself to aiding the victims of Nazi persecution. Reading Miep's account, I was struck by how typical she is of the 120 non-Jewish rescuers of varying backgrounds and nationalities I interviewed over the past five years for a social-psychological study of altruistic behavior during the Nazi era.

"I am not a hero.... It was not enough." Miep's lament is familiar to me. Not one of the rescuers I interviewed believed that the extraordinary help they had extended under the most extreme conditions in human history was "enough." Nor did a single rescuer regret her or his involvement, even though, for many, the cost was dear.

The word "typical," however, needs some qualifications. Rescuers are strong individualists, and it was their bold spirit and irreverence of imposed authority that in many cases enabled them to carry out their rebellious acts. Their rescue activity always mirrored their specific and highly individualized strengths, skills, and characters, and their motivations were diverse.

Basic to all rescuers, however, was a real awareness of need, a tremendous capacity to recognize the reality of the extreme situation, as well as an ability to realize their own responsibility and to admit to themselves that "these human beings will die if I do not intervene."

Although social psychologist Carol Gilligan has observed a morality based on a "different voice" in women, no specific gender differences emerged in my study of the motivations and behavior of rescuers. In fact, more

men than women in my study were emotionally motivated rescuers who gave compassion, pity, and a deep inner need as the reasons for helping Jewish victims.

While Gilligan found that women tend to make decisions based on feelings of social responsibility (men, she found, make decisions based on an abstract concept of justice), many women rescuers cited strong ideological beliefs as their primary motivation to rescue.

Both men and women who aided Jewish friends (rather than strangers) cited a deep emotional attachment to the people they saved as their motivation. In terms of their formative developmental years, a large majority of rescuers experienced common influences: an altruistic role model with whom they also performed helpful deeds while growing up; learning the value of tolerance for differentness from a parent or significant other; being encouraged by their parents to be independent and competent; and a loss in early childhood.

Miep's childhood years played an important role in the development of her altruistic behavior. Like many other starving and sick children who survived the hardships of World War I in Vienna, she was adopted by a Dutch family whose kindness, love and humanity made a great impression on her. She writes:

"... so many hands reached out to guide me I didn't know which one to grab first. The children all adopted me. There is a children's story in which a little child in a wooden cradle is washed away by flood and is floating on the raging waters, in danger of sinking, when a cat leaps onto the cradle and jumps from side to side of it, keeping the cradle afloat until it touches solid ground again and the child is safe. I was the child, and all these Dutch people in my life were the cats."

At 24, Miep met and began to work for Otto Frank; they shared a common language—German—and held similar political views; slowly a friendship evolved.

Miep felt a special attachment to the Franks' younger daughter, Anne. We learned from her book that Anne liked to be in plays at school. She talked about many school friends, speaking of them as though each were her best and only friend. She was obviously a child who liked the company of her peers. At nine, little Anne was developing quite a personality. The color in her cheeks was bright; her conversations came in a rush, writes Miep.

In 1940, the Germans invaded Holland. In the spring of 1942, the persecution of Jews intensified. The night after Margot Frank received a summons to report for forced-labor deportation to Germany, Miep and Jan transported the Franks' clothes and belongings to the warehouse annex. The next day, in pouring rain, Miep, suppressing her terror, escorted Margot by bicycle to the hiding-place.

From the moment they mounted their bicycles, "... we'd become criminals. There we were, Christian and Jew, without the yellow star.... Suddenly we'd become two allies against the might of the German beast among us." The next day, Otto Frank arrived at the annex with his wife, Edith, and daughter, Anne.

In response to frequent invitations from Anne during the two years of hiding, Miep and Jan once stayed overnight in the annex. "The quietness of the place was overwhelming." Miep recalls, "The fright of these people who were locked up here was so thick I felt it pressing down on me.... It was so terrible it never let me close my eyes. For the first time, I knew what it was like to be a Jew in hiding."

In August, 1944, the occupants of the secret annex were discovered and arrested by the Gestapo. In a daring effort to save her friends, Miep entered Gestapo headquarters and attempted to bribe the arresting officer.

In her final act of resistance, Miep returned to the locked and quarantined annex, removed the Franks' most precious belongings, including Anne's diary, and hid them as she waited for her friends to return. Out of respect for Anne's privacy, Miep did not read her diary.

Like other rescuers who had strong emotional attachments to their charges, Miep's relationship to the people she had helped did not end with the war. When Otto Frank returned from Auschwitz after liberation, Miep and Jan nursed him back to health.

In Miep's presence, he received a letter that informed him that Margot and Anne had died at Bergen-Belsen.

To comfort him, Miep retrieved Anne's diary from its hiding place in her desk. Handing it to Otto Frank, Miep said, "Here is Anne's legacy to you."

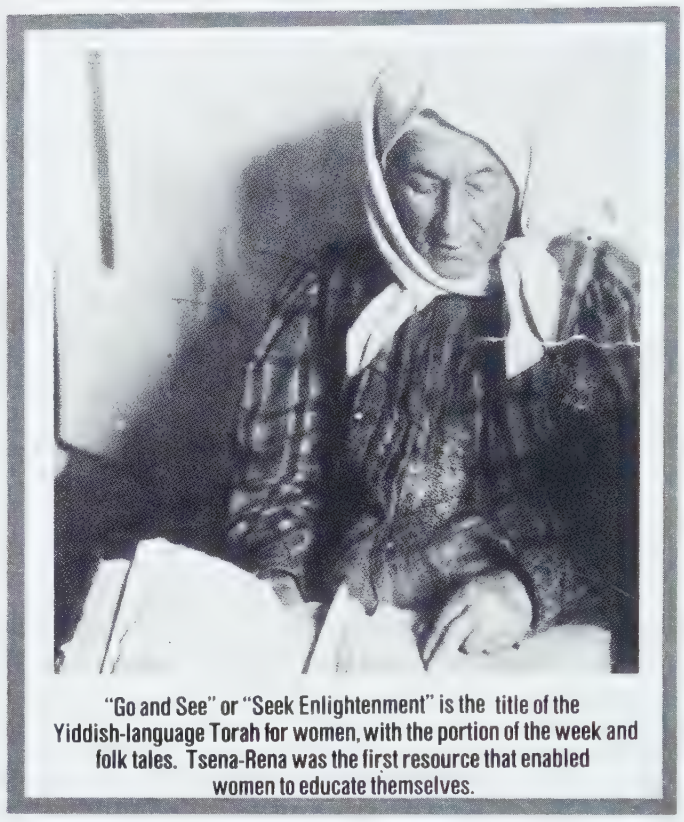
Not until the diary was in its second printing did Miep muster the courage to read the words of her young friend.

Miep's response is an intensification of what all of us have felt upon first reading Anne's words:

"Anne's voice tumbled out of the book, so full of life, moods, curiosity, feelings. She was no longer gone and destroyed. She was alive in my mind.... so much had been lost, but now Anne's voice would never be lost.... But always, every day of my life, I've wished that things had been different. That even had Anne's diary been lost to the world, Anne and the others might somehow have been saved. Not a day goes by that I do not grieve for them."

Dr. Eva Fogelman *is a social psychologist and psychotherapist. She is the Director of The Foundation to Sustain Righteous Christians at the International Center for Holocaust Studies at the Anti-Defamation League. The aim of the Foundation, which was founded by Rabbi Harold Schulweis of Encino, California, is to recognize and to lend support to those non-Jews who risked their lives to help Jews during the Holocaust. Fogelman is also writer and co-producer of the award-winning documentary, "Breaking the Silence: The Generation after the Holocaust," and is currently working on a book about rescuers.*

TSENA RENA



YIVO

"Go and See" or "Seek Enlightenment" is the title of the Yiddish-language Torah for women, with the portion of the week and folk tales. Tsena-Rena was the first resource that enabled women to educate themselves.

EVENTS

A Jewish Women's World Parliament will be convened in Jerusalem April 25-28, 1988 sponsored by the International Council of Jewish Women. The conference is designed to be a World Forum of Jewish Women Leaders. The theme will be "Towards the Year 2000—Shaping Our Common Future."
The Secretariat
Jewish Women's World
Leadership Forum
P.O. Box 50432
Tel Aviv
61500 Israel

The thirteeneth annual Conference on **Alternatives in Jewish Education** (CAJE) will be held at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem July 31-August 5, 1988.
CAJE
468 Park Avenue South
Room 904
New York NY 10016
(212) 696-0742

The National Women's Studies Association will hold its tenth annual conference, **"Leadership and Power: Women's Alliances for Social Change"** at the University of Minnesota June 22-26, 1988. The theme is how women of various backgrounds can work together.
NWSA '88
Lori Graven
or Ann Veverica
Dept. of Professional
Development
315 Pillsbury Drive SE
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis MN 55455-0139
(612) 625-9023

The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research will hold its third annual **Yiddish Folks Art Program** December 20-25, 1987 in Parkesville NY. The program will offer instruction in dance, folklore, language and many other areas.
Henry Sapoznik
YIVO
1048 Fifth Avenue
New York NY 10028
(212) 535-6700

Penina Peli, Chairwoman of the Jerusalem International Conference on Women and Halacha, held in December, 1986, is organizing a workshop on **women and kabbalah** (mysticism) for the next conference.
9 Brenner Street
Jerusalem Israel

A full-day interfaith seminar on **"Woman's Rite to Ritual"** will take place December 7, 1987 at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion to explore the role of women in today's modern religious liturgy.
HUC-JIR Brookdale Center
1 West 4th Street
New York NY 10012-1186
(212) 674-5300

STUDY GUIDES

B'nai B'rith Women has developed a package entitled **"Image of the Jewish Woman: Myth and Reality."** It contains four separate programs: an audio tape and discussion guide on **stereotyping of Jewish women**; an oral history project on the role of Jewish women in immigration and assimilation into American culture; a film-and-discussion guide on Jewish women and values; and an activity and discussion guide on how stereotypes affect relationships between Jewish women and men.
BBW's National Program
Services & Public Affairs Dept.
1640 Rhode Island Avenue NW
Washington DC 20036

"A Catalogue of Audio and Video Collections of Holocaust Testimony," the first annotated catalogue of collections of **taped testimony of survivors and other witnesses of the Holocaust**, is now available. Compiled by Drs. Joan Ringleheim and Esther Katz, it includes information on the location, access, and scope of collections around the country.
The Institute for Research in
History/Holocaust Catalogue
1133 Broadway, Suite 923
New York NY 10010

"Legacies: An audio introduction to the **history of women and the family** in America 1607-1870" is part of the Annenberg/CPB Audio Print Course Collection.
The Annenberg/CPB
Audio-Print Collection
University of
Wisconsin-Extension
WHA Radio
821 University Avenue
Madison WI 53706
(608) 263-3970

"The Western Jewish History Center: Guide to Archival and Oral History Collections," by Ruth Kelson Rafael, has been published by the Western Jewish History Center of the Judah L. Magnes Museum. This catalog of one of the largest collections of **archival and oral history materials on Jews** of the western United States is illustrated with photographs from the Center's archives and includes both name and subject indexes.
Judah L. Magnes Museum
2911 Russell Street
Berkeley CA 94705
(415) 849-2710

The second edition of **"The Jewish Women's Studies Guide"** compiled by Rabbi Sue Levi Elwell is now available from Biblio Press. It includes a collection of 18 Jewish women's studies syllabi by outstanding academics and instructors in Jewish institutions, including Evelyn Torton Beck, Rela Geffen Monson,

Celia Weisman, and others. It is available in paperback for $9.75.
Biblio Press
P.O. Box 4271
Fresh Meadows NY 11104

PUBLICATIONS AND FILM

"Women Speak to God: **The Prayers & Poems of Jewish Women**," edited by Marcia Cohn Spiegel and Deborah Lipton Kremsdorf, has been published by The Woman's Institute for Continuing Jewish Education. In the works here, women reveal in their own words their innermost thoughts about God and themselves.
Woman's Institute for Continuing Jewish Education
4079 54th Street
San Diego CA 92105

"How To Start a Jewish Women's Book Collection" by Marcia Posner is a step-by-step guide to **organizing a library of Jewish women's books and resource materials.** It is available for $3.50.
Jewish Book Council
15 East 26th Street
New York NY 10010-1579

"The 1988 Dramatist's Bible" published by the International Society of Dramatists contains listings designed to help the professional playwright as well as the novice. One chapter cross-references theaters with specialized script needs or interests, including Jewish ones.
ISD Fulfillment Center
Box 1310
Miami FL 33153
(800) 521-8333

"Maids and Madams," Mira Hamermesh's South African documentary (reported on in LILITH #16), is available for rental from:
Filmakers Library
133 East 58th Street
New York NY 10022
(212) 355-6545

GROUPS AND PROJECTS

The "Friends of Golda Meir, Inc." are asking for immediate help to **save the home where Golda Meir lived** in Denver from 1913 to 1921, which is in

danger of being demolished. To provide help, or for more information, contact:
Friends of Golda Meir, Inc.
P.O. Box 9693
Denver CO 80209
(303) 692-9734

The Jewish Women's Resource Center of the New York Section of the National Council of Jewish Women sponsors a **poetry project**, begun in spring of 1985, which meets monthly. Under the direction of Dr. Henny Wenkart, a published poet, participants read work aloud and receive detailed constructive criticism if they wish it. Admission is free and membership is not required.
(212) 535-5900

The International Women Artists Archive, founded in 1978, is a collection of thousands of books and exhibition catalogs, clippings from many kinds of magazines and newspapers, women's and art periodicals, and a slide library. The Archive maintains files on galleries, organizations, publishers and other resources for women artists and welcomes documentation on art by women. For information on their publication, IWAA News, or on membership, contact:
IWAA
P.O. Box 600
Hadley MA 01035

CALLS FOR MATERIALS

Midrashim are wanted for an **anthology of new interpretive writing** by Jewish women. Typed manuscripts may be sent by June 30, 1988 to:
Elaine Kahn
300 Sussex Avenue
Richmond Hill Ontario
Canada L4C 2G7

"Feminist Teacher" is a magazine for teachers, committed to **combatting sexism, racism** and other forms of oppression in the classroom. The editors are seeking articles and short essays about educational projects, personal experience, course syllabi, news of conferences and publications, as well as art work.
Feminist Teacher
Editorial Collective
Ballantine 442
Indiana University
Bloomington IN 47405

The National Women's Studies Association will begin publishing the *NWSA Journal*, a new interdisciplinary, **multicultural, feminist journal,** with the first issue scheduled for Spring 1988. The journal is soliciting scholarly essays in all disciplines, of interest to women's studies researchers, teachers, and others involved with feminist concerns.
Maryjo Wagner, Editor
NWSA Journal
Center for Women's Studies
207 Dulles Hall
230 W. 17th Street
The Ohio State University
Columbus OH 43201
(614) 292-7014

In its continuing efforts to assist in the identification of **suspected Nazi war criminals**, the Canadian Jewish Congress is seeking to locate **witnesses to events in Galicia,** primarily those which took place in Brzezany, Podhajce, Stryj, and Wisniowozyk. Witnesses to the persecution of the Jews in these places and the role played by the police are particularly needed. Anyone with such information is asked to contact:
The Holocaust
Remembrance Committee
Canadian Jewish Congress
1590 Docteur Penfield
Montreal Quebec
Canada H3G ICS

Editors of a book on the experiences of **lesbians who have relinquished children** for adoption, including intra-family adoption, seek manuscripts on these experiences.
Natural Mothers' Publishing Project
P.O. Box 146401
San Francisco CA 94114

Editors are seeking poems, short prose, letters, journal entries, photographs and drawings for an anthology on love between women over 60. The deadline is February 14, 1988.
Old Lovers
c/o WomanSpirit
2000 King Mountain Trail
Sunny Valley OR 97497

Tsena Rena *was compiled and written by Elizabeth Lichtenstein.*

(Continued from Page 5)
tor Aileen Cooper, as well as Mrs. Kemp's 21-year-old daughter, Judith, also participated. The trip was organized and partially funded by the National Conference on Soviet Jewry.

The Congressional Wives for Soviet Jewry was founded as an advocacy group by Helen Jackson, wife of the late Sen. Henry Jackson (D-WA) in 1978. Roughly one-half of the women married to members of Congress are involved in CWSJ, a very small number of whom are Jews.

Nudel was given special permission to travel to Moscow from her home in Bendery, Moldavia, to meet with the delegation. "We didn't expect to get to meet her," said Aileen Cooper. "We walked up many flights of stairs to the top floor of this apartment house, and there were many women there. Then we saw a small figure in the hallway" dressed in a simple skirt and blouse. "[Our hostesses] said, 'Of course you know Ida Nudel.' We were thrilled."

The American group spent several hours talking over food prepared by the refusenik women about their experiences, the capriciousness of the Soviet visa-granting system, and the need to continue to focus international attention on those Jews in the limbo of refusal.

Nudel, who was described by Joanne Kemp as "very artistic in her expression; very matter-of-fact but emotional," called her life "something out of Kafka." Said Cooper:

"She spoke about her experiences for an hour and a half; it was very emotional. Ida was telling us about how she ended up in Moldavia, and she just broke down. She had to leave the room."

Kemp said that Ida recognized the fact that she might not get out for a long time, if ever. "She says she often loses her spiritual strength," said Cooper, "but she doesn't look like it." **—Betsy Pisik**

NUDEL APPEAL UPDATE

(Continued from Page 3)
LILITH received many letters along with signatures to our Women's Appeal for Ida Nudel (see Kol Ishah*). The letters below are a representative sampling.*

Dear LILITH:
Thanks for sending me a copy of LILITH. I remember how much I enjoyed getting it in Congress, and I miss not having it. So you've got a new subscriber.

I hope the Ida Nudel Appeal works; I met her in the Soviet Union many years ago—what they're doing to her is just plain inhumane.

Elizabeth Holtzman
District Attorney of Kings County
Brooklyn NY

Dear LILITH:
I am delighted to learn that your magazine is actively engaged in work on behalf of Ida Nudel. The more positive persuasion the American public can put upon the U.S.S.R., the more chance there is that she and all of the refuseniks will be permitted to emigrate.

Hadassah has been actively engaged in a very strong Soviet Jewry program for many years. Although we work for all refuseniks, we have also undertaken a special effort for Ida Nudel. A number of years ago, we presented Ida Nudel (in absentia) with the Henrietta Szold Award, Hadassah's most prestigious award, at our National Convention. Her sister, Elena Fridman, accepted for her. Throughout the years, we have also had hundreds of our members writing to Ida, as well as to various officials on her behalf. Also, on Ida Nudel's recent birthday in April, literally thousands of birthday cards were sent to her from Hadassah members.

Evelyn W. Sondheim
National Soviet Jewry Chairman
Hadassah
New York NY

Dear LILITH:
Thank you for including me in the Women's Appeal on behalf of Ida Nudel. I enlisted the help of the residents of Philadelphia Geriatric Center, where I serve as Chaplain. I was able to collect 39 signed letters, all but a few of which are from my congregants, who range in age from 80 to 99. Those who signed were most enthusiastic, and glad to participate in the Mitzvah of *Pidyon Shivuyim*, releasing the imprisoned. One of them felt moved to write a note [which follows], which is most poignant as she is gravely ill.

Rabbi Dayle Friedman, Chaplain
Philadelphia Geriatric Center
Philadelphia PA

Please help Mrs. Nudel to live a good, clean, healthy life in the land and country where she will be happy and healthy.... November 7, 1987, I will be, with God's help, 86 years young. I had a girl and a boy. The girl went to the Holy Land at age 54, the boy at 60. They are waiting for me—a happy ending.

Eva Klein
Philadelphia Geriatric Center
Philadelphia PA

Dear LILITH:
Thank you for sending us a copy of your Appeal on behalf of Ida Nudel. The National Council of Jewish Women has always been committed to supporting and working for the cause of our brothers and sisters trapped in the Soviet Union. We are one of the member organizations in the Women's Plea for Soviet Jewry and were the National convener of this program in 1984. Just this year we issued an "Action Alert" calling on our members to write to Ida Nudel on her birthday.

David Kunin,
Coordinator Jewish Life
National Council of Jewish Women
New York NY

BE A FRIEND OF LILITH

Dear Readers:

Some of you reading this may be new subscribers. Welcome!

Others of you have been reading the magazine since its inception 12 years ago. To all of you, an important message:

LILITH needs your financial support now more than ever!

The extraordinary media coverage we recently experienced is but the beginning of an effort to reach out to women across the nation. We must now launch a direct mail campaign to let other women like you know about LILITH Magazine. We want them to become part of our family of subscribers.

If you're reading this page, you are obviously already familiar with LILITH and its unique coverage of Jewish women's issues. It makes sense that we should be turning to *you* for help in reaching other women (and men) who should know about the nation's only Jewish feminist magazine.

Make a tax-deductible contribution to LILITH right now and your name will appear on this page in the next issue along with others whose generosity helps to sustain LILITH.

For a contribution of $180, you will become a Friend of LILITH. We'll write to you from time to time, and try to let you know in advance when LILITH's editors and writers will be speaking in your area. We'll also give a gift subscription in your name to the library of your choice (a $20 value).

For $100, we'll still write to you, and we'll send you a free autographed copy of *Jewish and Female* by Susan Weidman Schneider (a $12.95 value).

For $50, we promise to write, and you'll receive an autographed copy of LILITH's Egalitarian Hagada by Aviva Cantor (a $3.95 value).

Remember, your tax-deductible contribution may be in honor or in memory of anyone you choose, or may be given to mark a special occasion in your own life.

Thanks for your support!

Name _____

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If contribution in honor or memory of someone, send acknowledgement to:

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Address _____

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Send contributions to: LILITH PUBLICATIONS, 250 W. 57th St., #2432, New York, N.Y. 10107.

THE EDITORS THANK THE FOLLOWING FOR THEIR GENEROUS FINANCIAL SUPPORT:

American Jewish Committee, Anonymous, Jewel Bellush, Sharon Brener, Nancy Beren, Gay S. Block, Rena J. Blumberg, Jeffrey Brateman, Linda Bronfman, Leona F. Chanin, Irene Dash, Ida Davidoff, Siddy N. Eiferman, Linda Eiseman, Sue Levi Elwell, Rachel Esserman, Sylvia Fish, Riv Ellen Foldes, Ruth Frenk, Lauren Gayle Friedman, Joyce K. Gilbert, Ellen Goldstein, Lisa Dale Goldstein, Betsy Gordon, Blu Greenberg, Patricia Hayden, Margaret R. Hunegs, Francia Isakoff, Isabel Karten, Francine Klagsbrun, Gail D. Klein, Edith N. Kostroff, Sarah S. Kovner, Corrine Krause, Ann R. Lerner, Barbara J. Leslie, Irene Levin, Rashalee Levine, Norma U. Levitt, Ruth W. Lieber, Rachel Lieberman, Kerry Lindemann-Schaefer, Jerome and Lois E. Lowenstein, R. Beverly Magidson, Gertrude Mann, Roberta Kay Marshall, Linda Goldenberg Mayman, Audrey Meline, Pamela Mendelsohn, Sherry Merfish, Elizabeth Milgram, Susan Miller, Cathy Mincberg, Anne Mintz, Carolyn Mintz, Louise R. Noun, Marsha Olin, Jan Picker, Joy N. Picus, Letty Cottin Pogrebin, Elaine Proler, Mallory Robinson, Molly Roche, Aviva Rosenbloom, Deborah Rosenholtz, Lindsey Schachinger, Bonnie Schneider, Ruth Seldin, Betty Shapiro, Virginia L. Snitow, Ruth L. Synder, Gloria Steinem, Betty Stone, Emily Sunstein, Susan Takiff, Esther Ticktin, Ruth Warshauer, Ruth Weisberg, Mildred Weissman, Henny Wenkart, Lillian Wohl

And Annette Blank, Shirley Fingerhood, Donna Finkelstein, Muriel Fox, Maya Miller, Elaine Pohl Moore, Judith Stern Peck, Anne G. Roiphe, Muriel F. Siebert, Elaine Silverstein, Sabrina Simrin, The Streisand Foundation

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The Jewish Family
Should we have more kids? When a Jewish wife becomes a widow. Surviving single. Mothers/daughters.
Our Minds/Our bodies
What we think of ourselves: our achievements and goals, our hair, our noses, our fat.
Women and the Holocaust
History plus first-hand accounts of women in the ghettos, the camps, and the Resistance, and the roles played by women in Israel and North America.

Volunteerism
The great debate. What would happen to the Jewish community if women withdrew their service?
Jewish Women and Power
Who has it, who reflects it. Do we want more power? Is power beautiful?
In the Arts
The Jewish woman as subject and object. Who's who among Jewish women artists, writers, film-makers, performers. And how we've been portrayed/betrayed in novels and movies.

LILITH

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